

Great Wall of China



Saturday 22nd - Sunday 30th September 2018



DESTINATION: CHINA / DURATION: 9 DAYS / DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

China

China is a country of epic standing; a giant country which boasts seaside, jungles, massive mountains, wildlife, architectural heritage and fascinating culture by the bucket-load. The incredible variations of culture can be experienced in a number of ways, even just in the variations of cuisine throughout the country; from the spicy stir fries of the Szechuan province to the piquant Peking duck of Beijing. A journey to China is a mesmerising adventure that from start to finish leaves you with an appetite for more.

The Great Wall

The Great Wall of China is the longest man-made structure on the planet which was built, rebuilt and maintained from 5 BCE to 16 CE in order to protect the Chinese empire from invaders. It stretches approximately 8850km (5500 miles) across northern China, all the way to the sea along an arc that roughly relates to the southern edge of Inner Mongolia. Some sections of the Wall are still in their original condition, scarred by battles of the past. A visit to the Great Wall of China is an opportunity to step back into history and marvel at the ingenuity of the Chinese dynasties and millions of soldiers who defended their land.

Beijing

Also known as Peking, Beijing is the capital of China and one of the most populated cities on the planet. Beijing is home to a staggering 21.5 million people in an area of only 16,000km². This city offers stunning ancient architecture next to high rise buildings and fast food restaurants, it gives you peace and serenity in enchanting temples located next to busy highways, and of course just slightly north of Beijing you find the awe-inspiring Great Wall. Beijing is also home to some of the most delicious cuisine on earth so take your time to explore the restaurants, sampling Peking duck, dumplings and noodles and much more.

Difficulty: Moderate

Undulating terrain with a few steep sections, lots of steps. Walking 4-8 hours per day for 5 consecutive days.

Accommodation:

3* hotel (3 nights),
guesthouses (4 nights)



Weather in September:

Min 5°C (night), max 30°C (day).

Terrain:

Undulating. Some steep sections. Walking on the wall (stone with lots of steps) and next to it, (dry, grassy terrain). Earth and shifting rubble (like scree) in some sections.

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Challenge Cost:

Registration fee: **£295**
and either...

Self funded balance: **£1700**

or

Sponsorship to charity: **£3400**

What's included?

Return flights from London (inc. airport taxes), all transfers and transport in China, accommodation in 3* hotel (3 nights), guesthouses on trek (4 nights), all meals, local expert English-speaking guides and support crew, trekking permits, a UK Different Travel tour manager.

What's not included?

Personal expenses (e.g. drinks, souvenirs etc.), vaccinations, Chinese visa (current cost £175 for postal application), travel insurance, tips (approx. £25-£35 per person), personal trekking kit.



The Trek

This trek takes you to a remote section of the Great Wall of China, from Gubeikou to Simatai. Not only will you trek on the wall itself, meticulously built and restored over thousands of years, but you will also have the opportunity to trek through wild and remote landscapes with distant views of green rolling hills, mountain peaks and with one of the great wonders of the world as the backdrop.

Staying in guesthouses throughout the trek allows you to gain an understanding of the 'real China' as you discover more about lifestyle of the local people and also taste some incredible local cuisine.

Who accompanies us?

The trek is accompanied by local English-speaking guides who have an excellent knowledge of trekking in the region. The guides are first aid trained and will support you throughout your journey. You will also be supported by an excellent team of assistant staff, cooks and drivers and a Different Travel Company UK tour manager.

What is the terrain like?

The trek is rated moderate to challenging as the terrain is hilly and undulating with steep sections to contend with both on and off the Wall. The distance trekked each day is 5-12km over 4-8 hours. You will not trek on the wall the entire time, often you will walk next to it through the countryside so be prepared for a variety of terrain underfoot from grassy, dry terrain of the countryside to the stone steps of the Great Wall. The Great Wall has been restored in some sections so you will find smooth paved ground with steps built up the hillside. In the original sections the Wall may be crumbling, with earth and stone rubble that shifts underfoot like scree, making it challenging to climb up it. In general you should expect to climb a lot of steps during the challenge so you must train with this in mind and ensure you do plenty of hill walking to prepare for the undulating terrain.

How tough is it?

The trek is rated moderately challenging. You can expect undulating terrain with a few steep sections and lots of steps. You will be walking 4-8 hours per day for 5 consecutive days.

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What is the climate like?

Autumn is considered the very best time to visit China as there is plenty of sunshine and mild temperatures (which drop sharply at the end of October). Temperatures will be dependent upon the weather which is usually clear and sunny. Some rain is to be expected in September and October but nothing like the heavy rain of the summer months. On average the temperature will range between 19°C to 26°C during the day and 5°C to 15°C at night. It's important to be prepared for all weather conditions and temperatures by packing non-cotton trek layers and waterproofs. It's better to have waterproofs and not need them, than to not have any when you need them!

Although the temperatures and conditions above are historically accurate, climate change can impact the seasons so you may experience uncharacteristic conditions during the trip which are out of our control. Should this happen the guide will assess the situation and make decisions to ensure the best enjoyment and ultimately safety of the group as a whole.

Where will we sleep?

During the trek you will be staying at local guesthouses in the villages of Gubeikou and Simatei, for two nights at each. The guesthouses are run by local Chinese families and offer simple but comfortable accommodation in twin rooms (sharing with another participant of the same sex) with shared bathroom facilities. Depending on the group size, you may sleep in two or more neighbouring guesthouses but you will eat all your meals and relax in the evening together.

What are bathroom facilities like?

There are basic toilet and shower facilities available. Toilet paper is provided at the guesthouses but you need to bring your own for use on the trek and also at any public toilets where toilet paper is never provided. During the trek you will need to pack up any toilet paper you use to dispose of properly at your guesthouse bin. NEVER leave toilet paper or other litter on the trail. Toilet paper must not be flushed, but disposed of in the bins provided. You are recommended to bring a small pack of baby wipes and hand sanitizer for your general hygiene throughout the day (e.g. to clean your hands after toilet visits and/or before lunch).



“Walking the wall was an amazing thing to do and I absolutely loved it .”

“A highlight was visiting the homes where the villagers live and having their culture, way of life and customs explained by our guide.”

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What about the food on the trek?

The trek day will start with a hearty breakfast of hot drinks, fruit, biscuits, noodles, rice or porridge. You will take a packed lunch each day which will consist of sandwiches, fruit, biscuits, dried fruit and nuts etc. A freshly cooked traditional Chinese evening meal will be served at the guesthouse comprising of rice, noodles, meat, tofu and vegetable dishes. Plates and mugs are provided as are chopsticks. If you're concerned about using chopsticks you may wish to bring cutlery. Please inform us in advance if you have any dietary requirements or preferences.

What about baggage?

The items you do not need for the trek will be left in a secure luggage room at the hotel in Beijing. During the trek you will only need to bring trek clothing, toiletries, water bottle, camera, personal items etc. You should pack a lightweight duffle bag/holdall for trek items not needed during the day (transported by vehicle) and a daypack which you will carry yourself containing things you need access to during the day.

Who can take part?

The trek can be undertaken by anyone of any age (min. 18 unless accompanied by an adult) as long as you have a good level of fitness and you are healthy and determined. There is no upper age limit.



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How fit do I need to be?

Adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected and so you are suggested not to expect standards to be the same as you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable (be it because of group pace, weather conditions, local bureaucracy or other factors) and itineraries may be altered to allow for this. For you to get the most out of your challenge it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. Suitable fitness preparation before departure forms part of this. You are advised to train to reach a good fitness level before departure to ensure fast recovery from each day's exertions.

If you do not already regularly exercise it is crucial that you start training (**including plenty of hills and stairs!**) before departure to ensure your best chance of enjoyment on the trip. This could include speed walking, hill walking, swimming, running, cycling, gym workouts, team sports, boot camps, yoga etc. You can download a number of free apps, which will help you train and track your progress. E.g. iMapMyRide (for cyclists), C25K (5k run), MyFitnessPal (for a variety of sports). Attempting to complete the trek without training but it will be difficult and may hinder your experience, and the experience of your teammates.

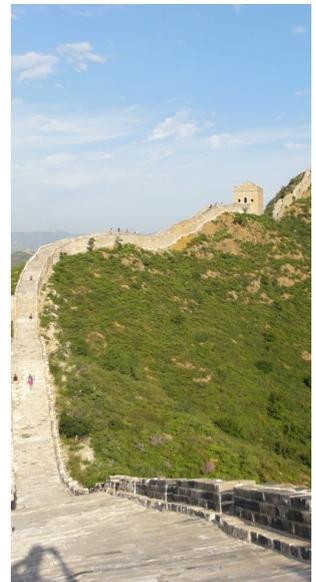
Medical Declaration

We require a medical form to be completed by everyone upon registering, and any pre-existing conditions, medications used and other medical issues **must** be noted and (if relevant) signed off by your GP. Any conditions that develop must be declared and a new medical form completed and signed.

Online Fitness Training

Different Travel has teamed up with Brightside Personal Training to bring you a fun and unique way to train for your upcoming challenge without needing to leave the comfort of your home or signing up for an expensive gym membership. For full details click here:

<http://brightsidept.kajabi.com/sp/34357>



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Itinerary

Day 1 (Sat 22nd September): London – Beijing

Depart London on an overnight flight to Beijing.

Day 2 (Sun 23rd September): Beijing

Arrive in Beijing and check into a central 3* hotel in time for a group dinner and a briefing on the week ahead. *Overnight at hotel.*

Day 3 (Mon 24th September): Beijing – Gubeikou

Today we transfer by bus to the Great Wall (approx. 3 hours). After lunch we enjoy an introductory trek to familiarise ourselves with the terrain of the days ahead. We wind our way uphill and reach the Great Wall at the top, from where you will enjoy views of the wall stretching across the countryside. We descend next to the wall then through a forest to a small town and to our first guesthouse at Gubeikou. *Trekking approx. 3-4 hours. Overnight at guesthouse (2 nights)*

Day 4 (Tues 25th September): Gubeikou

This morning we transfer from our guesthouse to explore the Gubeikou section. This area dates from the Ming Dynasty and is completely original, quite challenging and one of the lesser visited sections. It is believed to have seen more battles than any other part of the Great Wall and has long been a place of military significance and an important passage to the capital city. The start of the walk today is up a part of the wall which is almost completely worn away.

We return to the guesthouse tonight.

Trekking approx. 7 hours.

Day 5 (Weds 26th September): Gubeikou - Jinshanling

We set off early today to transfer to the start of our trek. Today we will trek up to a section of the wall known locally as the 'dragon standing on the beautiful golden mountain'. It's easy to see how the wall resembles a dragon as it weaves across the land. The views are stunning and you will have hundreds of great photographic opportunities. Unlike other sections of the wall, this area has seen little restoration and many of the stairs and turrets have crumbled away to leave steep stone slopes between each watch tower. We descend through forests and past farmland before transferring to our guesthouse in Simatai.

Trekking approx. 6-7 hours.

Overnight at guesthouse (2 nights).

Day 6 (Thurs 27th September): Jinshanling - Simatai

Today's trek takes us along a restored section of the wall originally built in the 15th century. In contrast to the unrestored sections of the previous days, here you can see how the wall looked when it was built centuries ago. Here you will gain an appreciation of not only the incredible effort in building the wall, but the meticulous attention to detail, tactical wisdom and also subtle beauty in its construction. We descend through the forest and transfer to our guesthouse in Simatai.

Trekking approx. 7-8 hours.

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Itinerary

Day 7 (Fri 28th September): Simatai - Beijing

After breakfast we transfer to the start of our exhilarating half-day trek up to a remote and rarely visited watch tower at the top of a small mountain. After enjoying the views from the top we descend on a winding trail through the forest and past fruit farms before transferring back to the guesthouse for lunch and a final farewell to our team. After lunch we transfer back to Beijing.

Trekking approx. 4-5 hours.

Overnight at hotel (2 nights).

Day 8 (Sat 29th September): Beijing

Today you will have guided visits to the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square before some free time and a special farewell dinner tonight.

Overnight at hotel.

Day 9 (Sun 30th September): Beijing - London

Transfer to the airport for the return flight to London. Depending on flight schedules you may arrive into London on Monday 1st October.

N.B. This itinerary may change due to unusual weather, the ability of the group and so on. We will do our best to keep to the itinerary but we cannot be held responsible for changes that occur outside of our control. In all circumstances your guide and tour leader will have the final say in the interest of the group's health and safety.



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Great Wall of China Challenge Information: A-Z

A is for Arrival. British passport holders require a visa to enter Mainland China (exc. Hong Kong and Macau). You will need to organize this yourself, but The Different Travel Company will provide you with all the necessary details and support documents to apply for the visa, at the time you need to apply. Please see http://www.visaforchina.org/LON_EN/ for more information about fees and application procedures. Cost at time of writing is £84 for a postal service. You must apply for a single entry **tourist visa**.

A is also Accommodation. You will stay in 3* hotels in Beijing and guesthouses during the trek in Gubeikou and Simatai. All accommodation is on a twin-share basis throughout. A single occupancy room (at a supplement) may be possible, subject to availability. During the trek you may occupy two or more neighbouring guesthouses depending on the final group size, but you will share your

meals together and be able to relax in the evenings as a group.

A is also for Altitude. You will not be trekking at altitude during the challenge. The average altitude is around 700-900m. The highest altitude on the entire stretch of Wall is 1,534m and you will not be visiting that part.

B is for Begging. Begging is not very common in China, but in the large cities, such as Beijing you may find people begging for money or food. Quite often these people are young children or have deformities. We do not recommend giving to beggars or children as it encourages reliance on tourists. Please speak to your local guide for more information on ways to give appropriately.

B is also for Books. Some good reading material to learn more about China includes: Lonely Planet China (May 2015); £20.99

Rough Guide to China (June 2014); £18.99.

Lonely Planet Mandarin Phrasebook (Oct 2015); £4.99.

Please note: these books contain maps showing Taiwan as independent from China. Chinese officials will confiscate these books if discovered. You may wish to add a false cover to your guidebook or hide it in your luggage to avoid confiscation.

B is also for Boots. You will need to wear good quality hiking boots so please ensure you have some well in advance of departure so you can break them in properly. Look out for ones with good ankle support and a Vibram sole. Make sure you try on lots of pairs before you choose some. You are recommended to wear your boots on the plane (or carry in hand baggage) just in case there are any problems/delays with your luggage. Comfortable boots are one of the most difficult pieces of luggage to replace/hire at short notice.

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B is also for Bottle. You need a bottle to carry your own drinking water, up to 3 litres per day. Most people bring a two-litre CamelBak or Platypus hydration system plus a one-litre bottle as a backup. Please note that 'own brand' and cheap hydration systems are notorious for splitting, leaking or valves not functioning properly. CamelBak and Platypus are the leader in this market because their products are significantly better quality and more reliable. You are strongly recommended to test your hydration system before the trip to check for problems and learn how to use it properly. **See D is for Dehydration and W is for Water.**

C is for Clothing. People in China are very smartly dressed and presentable, often wearing designer fashion and other 'Western' styles. It will be appreciated to dress well and respectfully. However, it is important to dress modestly particularly in rural areas where

the locals may not be accustomed to Westerners. Short shorts and skirts and very tight or low cut tops should be avoided to avoid attention from the opposite sex. You should bring appropriate trekking clothes for the trek itself, such as breathable t-shirts and zip-off trousers as it can get very hot during the day. Please note that t-shirts with dates of political significance (such as 1976) and offensive slogans are not tolerated and being detained by police and having the offending clothing confiscated and given an alternative is a very real possibility.

C is also for Communications. Staying in touch is easy from Beijing. Most mobile phone networks will successfully roam in China (contact your provider for information about charges and to set up roaming on your phone) and there is Wi-Fi and internet access widely available. Access to social media sites such as Facebook,

Twitter and Instagram, and all websites owned by or affiliated with Google are blocked due to government restrictions. On the trek, mobile phone access will vary depending on your home network, roaming capabilities, contract type and mobile handset. Don't forget to turn off data to avoid unexpected data charges.

C is also for Culture Shock. China is a massive country and some commonplace 'quirks' can cause shock to the visitor. Spitting in public is seen throughout the country by both men and women. Smoking in public places is common. Haggling in the market place is expected, and prices are often five or more times more expensive than they are worth! See H is for Haggling, E is for Etiquette and B is for Begging.

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D is for Day pack.

Throughout the trek your daypack is your responsibility and you will be carrying your own – so don't make it too heavy. We recommend a 25-30 litre pack. It is likely to weigh around up to 6kg when packed so you are expected to take this equivalent with you during your training trips so you are fully prepared for the trekking. You will need to carry essentials with you (personal first aid kit, waterproofs, sun hat, sunglasses, sun cream, water bottle, toilet paper, wet wipes, camera etc.) as you will not have access to your main pack while trekking.

D is also for Dehydration.

Day time temperatures can rise to 30°C so it is wise to consume plenty of water to avoid the risk of dehydration. You should bring a good supply of rehydration salts with you. You can buy the small packets from chemists in different flavours and just add the powder to quantity of water mentioned on the packet. You can also purchase electrolyte tablets (e.g. Nuun or High5)

which you add to your drinking water to turn it into a sports drink to help prevent dehydration before it begins. See also W is for Water.

D is also for Dietary

Requirements. Please ensure that you notify us of any dietary requirements at the time of booking. Dietary requests may not be possible to cater for without advance arrangement. The majority of special diets, such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, etc., can be catered for but please note that we cannot guarantee that food preparation will have taken place in a contamination free environment.

D is also for Difficulty. This trek is classified as moderate. Each day you can expect to be walking for around 5-8 hours on various terrain. The activity level is moderately high but **don't expect it to be easy**, there will still be some steep hills to climb as well as rough terrain underfoot. **You will need to train in preparation for this.**

D is also for Discount.

Nomad Travel have kindly offered a 10% discount against any purchase of kit and equipment online or in-store and 10% discount off vaccinations at their travel clinics. Cotswold Outdoor also offer a fabulous 15% discount off their kit and equipment. You will receive a discount voucher upon booking.

D is also for Drink. Green tea (绿茶 *lǜchá*) is provided in many restaurants and there are hundreds of varieties of tea (茶 *chá*) available for the enthusiast. Bottled water (水 *shuǐ*) is widely available and is very cheap (around 1 Yuan). Fruit juices, soft drinks, beer, wines and spirits are also widely available. It is best to avoid ice in drinks as it is not always safe. Coffee is increasing in popularity and establishments like Starbucks are popping up all over large cities in China.

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E is for Electricity. Two flat prong plug sockets are standard in China, so please take an appropriate adaptor. Electricity is 220V/50Hz.

E is also for Environment. The wonderful environment of the Great Wall of China is also an extremely fragile one. Increasing population density and number of trekkers threatens to destroy the very beauty which attracts us in the first place. We are extremely environmentally conscious and aim to minimise our impact as much as possible. We are well motivated towards eco-friendly practices and carry out all our garbage, apart from that which can be safely and easily disposed of at the guesthouses. Our aim is to help protect and preserve this beautiful environment for future generations of trekkers to enjoy.

E is also for Etiquette. The use of chopsticks is standard throughout China and there is some important etiquette related to their use. You must not put chopsticks upright into your rice bowl. This is indicative of incense for the dead and is considered a wish for death of those around you. Diners must use their own chopsticks to take food from communal bowls as there are no serving utensils provided. If requested, it is acceptable to ask for communal utensils. You should not play with your chopsticks, hit them together to make noise, or gesticulate with them. Slurping is considered uncivilised and not expected when drinking soup or tea. When eating rice, you should bring the bowl to your bottom lip, and using the chopsticks, scoop the rice into your mouth to avoid spilling it over the table. **See also C is for Culture Shock.**

E is also for Expenses. You will need to budget for local staff tips, laundry, drinks, personal spending money, personal equipment and souvenirs. There are lots of ATMs close to the hotel in Beijing if you wish to withdraw cash, but be aware that your bank may charge for overseas withdrawals and transactions and some banks block overseas transactions so inform your bank before departure. You can purchase Chinese Yuan in advance from bureau de changes in the UK but the rate of exchange is poor so it works out cheaper to withdraw cash on arrival. If you wish to exchange Pounds Sterling to Yuan this is possible too. Do not bring US Dollars. **See also M is for Money.**

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F is for First Aid kit. You should have a small first aid kit of essential items which is for your own personal use. Your tour leader is not allowed to give you medication so you must ensure you have access to your own first aid kit in your daypack. E.g. personal prescription medicine, painkillers, plasters, blister plasters, insect repellent (containing 50% DEET), anti-histamines, Imodium (Loperamide), rehydration sachets, lip balm with SPF, antiseptic cream etc.

F is also for Fitness. This tour is classified as moderate for someone of a good general level of fitness. The Great Wall is made up of hundreds of thousands of stairs, some of which have begun to crumble and are more like steep gravel slopes. Training for this is imperative for your enjoyment.

F is also for Food. You will eat at local restaurants and have delicious meals prepared by your trek team on the trek. Typical dishes include

vegetables, tofu and meat in a variety of different styles and sauces, soups, noodles and rice. Vegetarian choices are easily catered for. Fast food restaurants and coffee chains such as Starbucks, Costa, McDonalds, Burger King, and KFC etc. are becoming very popular and are easy to find in large cities.

H is for Haggling. When shopping for gifts in market places where there are no price tags on items it is expected that you will haggle. The first price is sometimes up to five times more than the value of the item, but remember that you should engage with the vendor to encourage rapport before haggling then only pay what you think is a good price for the item, not trying to get the price as low as possible.

H is also for Head Torch. This is invaluable for finding your way to the toilet at night or reading in the evenings etc. The Petzl Tikka headlamp is an example of a very high quality

head torch but there are some very good inexpensive head torches available if you shop around. Please ensure you take an LED torch, as ones with bulbs are not bright enough, and bring some spare batteries.

H is also for Health. Different Travel regrets that we cannot provide medical advice on recommendations on vaccinations you should have because each person's medical requirements will differ depending on their medical and travel history.

You MUST see your own GP or travel health professional for a personalised medical assessment at least 8 weeks before travelling to ensure that all appropriate vaccinations are up to date. For general information on vaccinations, visit

<http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk> but your GP or travel health professional should be the first stop for an in depth consultation tailored to your medical history.

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H is also for Hiking Poles.

Many people find trekking poles very useful as it takes pressure off the knees and can make trekking easier, particularly during the descent, but some people find them a hindrance. You are advised to try them out during your training walks to see if you think they would suit you.

H is also for Hygiene. Basic shower facilities are available at your guesthouses during the trek. You are advised to bring a hand sanitizer and a small pack of baby wipes for general hygiene during the day.

I is also for Insurance. The Different Travel Company will do everything possible to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip however unexpected things can occur such as your cancellation, delays, medical problems and baggage loss etc. Thus, the purchase of travel insurance for our expeditions, such as a policy from Campbell Irvine, is

mandatory and you are advised to organise this at the time of booking to ensure you are covered immediately. Travel Insurance is a cost effective way to protect yourself and your equipment. www.campbellirvinedirect.com/differenttravel

Please note: *most travel insurance policies protect you before departure too so it is advised to buy insurance as close to booking as possible to protect the loss of your registration fee as a result of cancellation due to injury, illness etc.*

I is also for Internet. Due to Government restrictions, some websites may not be accessible in China, such as social networking websites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google and video websites such as YouTube. Websites containing political propaganda, opinions and anti-governmental campaigns are also blocked, and it would be best not to search for anything political during your stay.

Browsing is sometimes monitored at internet cafes so it is not secure and you should be aware of this while using the internet and use incognito or private browsing mode and ensure you log out.

I is also for Insect Repellent.

There are quite a few mosquitoes so you may wish to take repellent with you. DEET is the most effective repellent available. The Department of Health recommends 50% DEET is the maximum that you should use on your skin. Never use 100% DEET as this is not intended for use on the skin. DEET can melt plastic, stain clothes and remove dye so please use with caution.

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K is for Kit bag. You will need a bag which will contain your trek items (e.g. change of clothes, toiletries etc.) and will be transported by a vehicle between guesthouses. Some *examples* of suitable kit bags include:

Large sports/gym holdall or travel bag.

A large rucksack with your gear packed inside a rucksack liner is suitable too.

North Face Base Camp duffel bag, (various sizes)

Mountain Equipment Wet and Dry Bag (various sizes)

There are many brands and models of kit bag available in outdoors stores for various prices.

As long as all your trek gear fits and is within the weight limit (8-10kg) it doesn't matter if it is larger or smaller. **Do not** bring a solid suitcase or holdall with wheels as this is not suitable.

L is for Language. Putonghua (普通话) meaning 'Common Speech' is the national

language of mainland China. Also known as Mandarin, this is spoken by 837 million people worldwide. Mandarin is a very tonal language and uses Chinese characters for written text. Pinyin is the Romanised version of Chinese words which can make understanding the language simpler for non-Chinese. Please see the information on page 18 for useful Chinese phrases.

L is also for Luggage. You should take three types of luggage with you for your trip:

- 1) A large suitcase or rucksack which you will check in for the flight
- 2) A holdall or soft rucksack for your trek luggage which will be transported between guesthouses for you
- 3) A daypack of 25-30 litres capacity which you will carry yourself during the trek.
- 4) Combination padlocks to secure your bags

M is for Money. The currency of China is Renminbi (人民币), the People's Money, and is abbreviated to RMB. The basic

unit for this money is the Yuan which is also referred to colloquially as Kuai. At the time of writing (December 2016), £1 was approximately ¥9. You can now purchase Chinese Yuan in advance from bureau de changes in the UK but the rate of exchange is poor so usually works out cheaper to withdraw cash on arrival, even with bank fees considered. There are many ATMs in Beijing but be aware that your bank may charge for overseas withdrawals and transactions. Some banks block overseas transactions so inform your bank of your travel plans before departure. There are no ATMs along the trail – you must bring enough cash with you for the trek. If you wish to bring cash to exchange, do not bring Scottish or Channel Islands as these are will be rejected by local bureau de changes. Do not bring US Dollars unless this is your home currency. See also E is for Expenses.

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N is for Nibbles. High energy snacks, chocolate and sweets are essential during your trek to keep your energy levels high and as a morale boost if you are having a bad day. Bring snacks you like to eat, rather than things you think are good for you. Some people bring dried fruit, nuts (especially walnuts and almonds), Kendal mint cake, popcorn, energy bars such as Mulebar, Clif bars, etc. Others bring bags of jelly babies, cake bars and other snacks of their preference.

P is also for Photocopies. Photocopy of all your documents (insurance details, flight numbers, passport, credit/debit cards etc.) and take a copy with you during the trip, kept separate from the originals. If you lose any of your documents you will then have access to a copy online and with you. You are also advised to scan and email these copies to yourself and a trusted family member or friend so you have a copy online too.

P is also for Photography. When taking photographs of the local people, it is polite to ask their permission. Taking a photograph of someone without their permission – especially in rural areas can cause offence. In contrast, taking photographs of someone you have become friendly with is usually very welcome, and often groups of Chinese people will ask you to pose for a photograph with them, particularly those people with blonde hair or very tall people.

R is for Religion. Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism are the main religions of China. The government does not actively encourage religion being atheist but people are free to choose their own faith. Spirituality plays an important part of the lives of Chinese people, particularly in regards to ancestor worship, which is an ancient Chinese belief and original Chinese religion.

S is for Safety. Incidences of petty theft such as pick-pocketing and bag snatching do occur in the larger cities and tourist areas so common sense precautions apply (no flashy jewellery, keep wallets out of sight, don't leave bags unattended etc.).

S is also for Sleeping bag liner. Sheets and blankets are provided in the guesthouses but some people like to bring a silk or cotton sleeping bag liner for peace of mind that you are sleeping in your own sheet each night. This is not necessary and is totally optional.

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S is also for Socks. It is important that the socks you choose are of good quality, non-cotton and will not slip down or sag in your boots which is one of the main causes of blisters. During your trek you will be wearing your breathable, waterproof boots and so you should wear socks to compliment these. Cotton socks absorb sweat and hinder its evaporation, making them damp and therefore likely to rub against your feet, causing blisters. Socks containing Coolmax (a brand of polyester), nylon, or Merino wool all have wicking properties. This means that instead of the fabric absorbing sweat, it pulls it away from the skin for it to evaporate. Socks like this compliment the breathability of your boots, and your feet will stay cool and you will avoid blisters. Liner socks are also a worthwhile consideration.

S is also for Souvenirs. China provides splendid opportunities for the shopper especially for silks and cotton, gemstones, carpets, bed linen, handicrafts in all types of medium, paintings and much more. Don't forget to haggle!

S is also for Spitting. Spitting is very common in China and completely acceptable because Chinese people consider it unhealthy to swallow phlegm. It is very likely that you will see (and hear) people spitting but remember that this is normal behaviour and you should avoid confronting anyone about it. The government is beginning a campaign to reduce spitting but it remains a common part of Chinese lifestyle. However, it is not considered proper for a Westerner to spit in public, and we do not recommend that you spit.

S is also for Sunglasses. These are important as they will protect your eyes from the sun which can be very bright on the trek as it reflects off the Wall. Taking a spare pair is recommended.

T is for Tickets (or e-tickets). These will be emailed to you two weeks before departure.

T is also for Tipping. Tipping is not common in China but your local guides and support staff will appreciate a tip at the end of the trek. A suggested amount is £25-35 per trekker in local currency (250 – 350 Yuan) which will be pooled together and shared between the local guides and support staff. Please note that tipping is not expected in restaurants, cafés, in taxis or hotels etc.

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T is also for Toilet Facilities.

Toilet facilities in China vary from clean to absolutely shocking. During the trek toilet facilities will be basic – a hole in the ground with a toilet seat on legs to sit on over the hole. At the hotels, Western flushing toilets will be provided. You should always put toilet paper into the bin provided as flushing paper will clog the system. In the cities, the Asian squat variety of toilet is commonplace and toilet paper is rarely provided. Sometimes you will find a toilet paper dispenser outside the bathroom, or a vendor will sell you some at the doorway, otherwise, always carry toilet paper with you. Generally, restaurants such as McDonalds or KFC will have Western style toilets and fairly clean facilities.

W is for Weather. The weather along the Great Wall varies from day to night depending on the time of day. The nights can get very cold (down to 5°C) and the days can get very hot (up to 30°C). September and October are considered the best months to visit the Great Wall of China. There is not much rain and the temperatures are generally comfortable with low humidity. Cooler temperatures in the city also mean less air-pollution to cloud the beautiful scenery around the Great Wall of China.

W is also for Water. All **tap water** on this trip is undrinkable; even at the hotel. **You must not brush your teeth or rinse your mouth with the tap water**, only use bottled or purified water. Bottled water is provided for you during the trek.

Z is for Zinc Oxide tape. When your boots start to rub against your feet, you can apply zinc oxide tape to the hot spot to stop a blister developing. Prevention is better than cure!

Last updated December 2016



Useful Chinese Phrases

Tones

1. First tone (ā) Flat, high pitch - more sung instead of spoken
2. Second tone (á) Low to middle, rising - pronounced like the end of a question phrase (*What?*)
3. Third tone (ǎ) Middle to low to high, dipping - **Note:** For two consecutive words in the 3rd tone, the first word is pronounced as if it is in the 2nd tone.
4. Fourth tone (à) High to low, rapidly falling - pronounced like a command (*Stop!*)
5. A fifth tone This is a neutral tone, which is rarely used by itself but frequently occurs as the second part of a phrase.

Basics

Hello.

你好。 Nǐ hǎo.

How are you?

你好吗? Nǐ hǎo ma?

Fine, thank you.

很好, 谢谢。 Hěn hǎo, xièxie.

My name is _____ .

我叫 ____ 。 Wǒ jiào _____ .

Please.

请。 Qǐng.

Thank you.

谢谢。 Xièxiè.

You're welcome.

不客气。 Bú kèqi.

Excuse me. (*getting attention*)

请问 qǐng wèn

Excuse me. (*begging pardon*)

打扰一下。 Dǎrǎo yíxià ; 麻烦您了, Máfán nín le.

I'm sorry.

对不起。 Duìbùqǐ.

It's okay. (polite response to "I'm sorry")

没关系 (méiguānxi).

Goodbye

再见。 Zàijiàn

I can't speak Chinese.

我不会说中文。 Wǒ bú huì shuō zhōngwén.

Do you speak English?

你会说英语吗? Nǐ huì shuō Yīngyǔ ma?

Is there someone here who speaks English?

这里有人会说英语吗? Zhèlǐ yǒu rén huì shuō Yīngyǔ ma?

Help! (in emergencies)

救命! Jiùmìng!

Good morning.

早安。 Zǎo'ān.

Good evening.

晚上好。 Wǎnshàng hǎo.

Good night.

晚安。 Wǎn'ān.

I don't understand.

我听不懂。 Wǒ tīng bù dǒng.

Where is the toilet?

厕所在哪里? Cèsuǒ zài nǎlǐ?

Problems

I don't want it! (useful for people who come up trying to sell you something)

我不要 (wǒ búyào!)

Numbers

Chinese numbers are very regular. While Indo-Arabic (Western) numerals have become more common, the Chinese numerals shown below are still used, particularly in informal contexts like markets.

0 〇, 零 líng

1 一 yī

2 二 èr (两 liǎng is used when specifying quantities)

3 三 sān

4 四 sì

5 五 wǔ

6 六 liù

7 七 qī

8 八 bā

9 九 jiǔ

10 十 shí



Suggested Packing List

Essentials

- E-tickets + pre-departure info
- Passport & copy
- Chinese visa
- Money / ATM card(s)
- LED head torch + batteries
- Pen for immigration forms
- Diary/Notebook
- Sunglasses (100% UV)
- Adaptor: two flat pins (US)
- Travel insurance information

Clothing & Footwear

- Hiking boots
- Shoes for evenings (optional)
- Trek socks
- Underwear
- Non-cotton base layer top
- Non-cotton t-shirt
- Thermal top and bottoms
- Lightweight trek trousers
- Warm fleece
- Waterproof jacket
- Lightweight warm jacket
- Sun hat/bandana/Buff
- Warm hat
- Clothes for sightseeing
- Casual shoes for sightseeing

Hygiene

- Shampoo / conditioner
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Antiperspirant/deodorant
- Shower gel/ shave kit / loofah
- Wet wipes
- Toilet paper
- Sun cream (high SPF)
- After sun/ moisturiser
- Hand sanitizer
- Feminine hygiene products
- Nail brush
- Small travel towel

First Aid Kit

- Prescription medicine
- 50% DEET insect repellent
- Paracetamol / Ibuprofen
- Imodium (Loperamide)
- Rehydration (Electrolade/ Dioralyte)
- Muscle rub (tiger balm/Deep Heat)
- Plasters and blister plasters
- Anti-histamine tablets/cream
- Antiseptic cream (e.g. Savlon)
- Indigestion remedy (e.g. Gaviscon)
- Lip balm with SPF protection
- Decongestant (optional)*
- Throat lozenges (optional)*
- Scissors/tweezers (optional)*
- Spare glasses/contact lenses

Optional

- Camera + spare batteries
- Video Camera + charger
- Mobile phone + charger
- iPod/MP3 player
- Walking pole(s)
- Plastic bags – various sizes
- Solar charger / battery pack

Luggage

- Luggage to check in on flight
- Trek kit bag/holdall
- Daypack (25-30 litres)
- Combination padlock(s)

Eating and Drinking

- Energy snacks
- 2-litre bottle (e.g. CamelBak)
- 1-litre bottle
- Electrolyte tablets (optional)*

Sleeping

- Eye mask / Ear plugs
- Sleeping bag liner (optional)
- Pyjamas

PLEASE NOTE: This list is just a guideline and is not exhaustive – it does not take into account your personal preference or requirements. If you have any questions please contact info@different-travel.com

