



US English

Sign In

My Bookings

milesaway

US CITY GUIDES

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

INTERESTS

TRAVEL TIPS

TRAVEL STORIES

MUST READ

Namaste! Everythi...

TRENDING STORIES

BUDGET TRAVEL

Home

Travel Guide

QUIZZES & INFOGRAPHICS

MEET YOUR WRITERS

Ready for an adventure?

Call 1-877-674-6064

for deals too good to be published.



POST CATEGORIES

Post Categories

TRAVELING? SEE THINGS TO DO IN TOP US CITIES

How to Spend 48 Hours in Beijing (And Not Miss Out on the Biggest Attractions!)

Sandy Bornstein

November 15, 2016

Travel Guide

1 Comment

A 48-hour visit to Beijing, China provides a crash course into Chinese culture and history. This capital city has imperial sites that reflect centuries of Asian history. History mavens and novices alike will be fascinated by a city that remained closed to Westerners until the late 1970s.

With a limited amount of time in such a large and vibrant city, it's necessary to plan ahead. Traffic can be cumbersome and patience is essential. Without an interpreter, communicating with locals may get lost in translation sometimes. Those booking a tour should double check to make sure that all of their "must see" attractions are included in their package.

But for independent travelers, here is our suggested itinerary for a whirlwind tour of Beijing's finest landmarks.

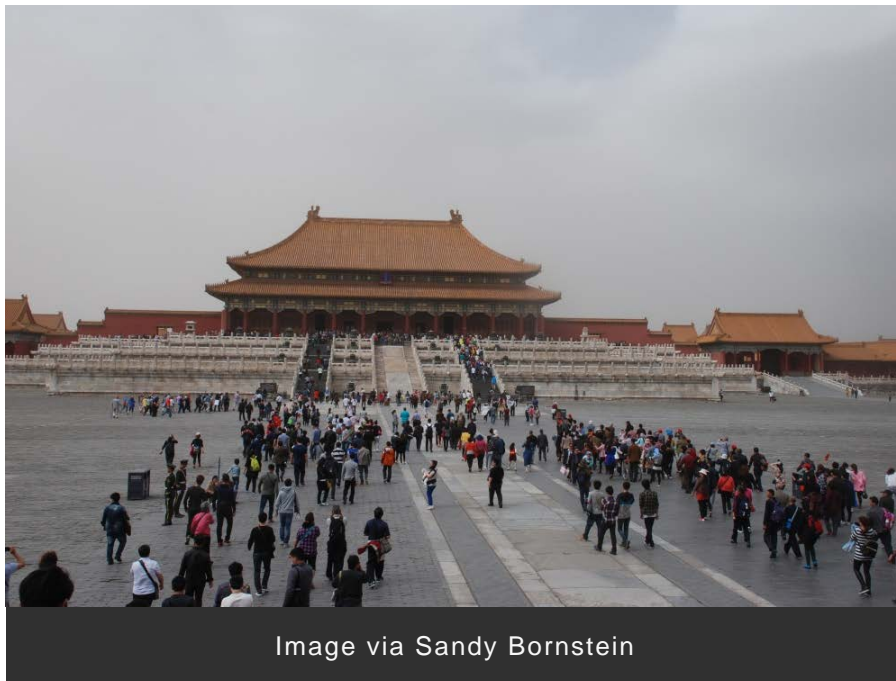


Image via Sandy Bornstein

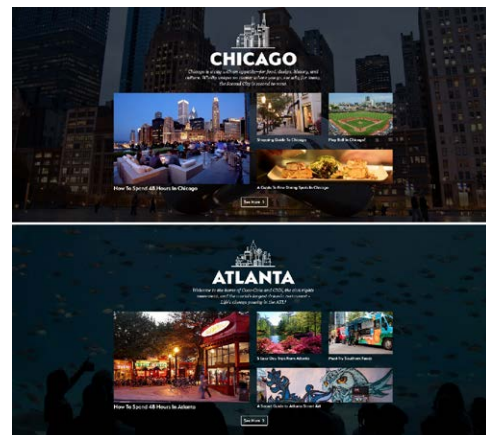
DAY ONE

Temple of Heaven

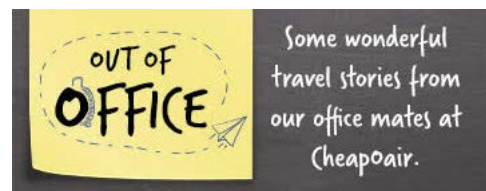
This multi-building attraction dates back to the 15th century. It is set in a one-acre plot of land. Many of the structures were originally designed as a place for the Ming and Qing emperors to worship Heaven and to offer sacrifices for good harvests and plentiful rains.

Tiananmen Square

Even though the original square was built in the 17th century, Tiananmen Square has become a political symbol in modern times. An unknown number of people died in 1989 when Chinese troops attacked pro-democracy protesters. Most travelers take pictures of the monuments and buildings and possibly the daily national flag raising ceremony. A lengthier stay could include tours of the Great Hall of the People, the Chairman Mao Zedong Memorial Hall, or the China National Museum.



STAFF TRAVEL STORIES



RECENT POSTS

Looking for a Unique & Authentic Travel Experience? Volunteer Abroad

Meet the Blogger Who "Travels While Crip"

Uruguay: The Overlooked Beachy Paradise of South America

Farewell Korea: Saying Goodbye to a Place I Called Home for 2 Years

The Stories Behind Some of Asia's Famous Street Food

BLACK HISTORY

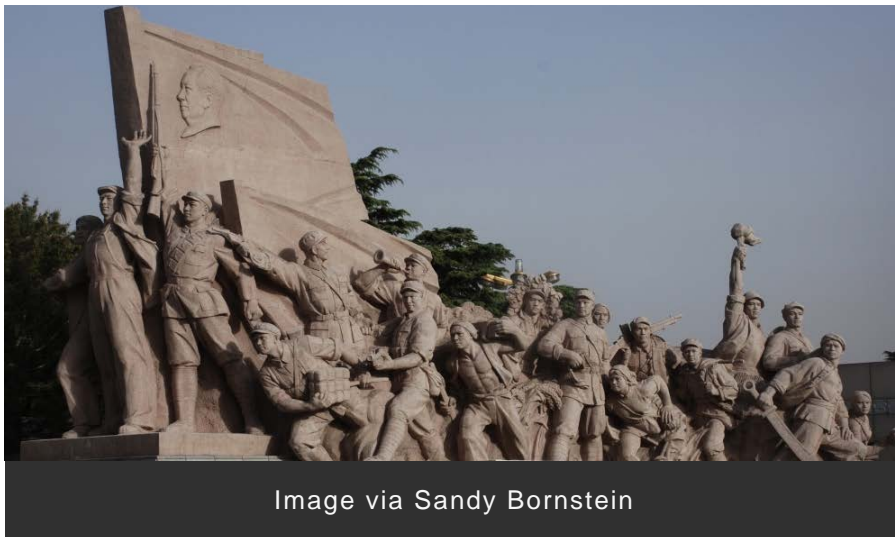


Image via Sandy Bornstein

Forbidden City

Modern guests are only able to see certain parts of the Forbidden City — a palace so named because ordinary citizens were not allowed to enter through the gates during the Ming and Qing Dynasties when it was occupied by the royal families. All visitors enter through the Meridian Gate that tops 125 feet and then are quickly herded through a series of massive courtyards that connect low horizontal buildings.

On a busy day, the tumult can be overwhelming, especially when encircled by tour groups speaking many different languages. One could easily spend an entire day exploring all of the buildings open to the public. But if you've got other things to see in your two-day whirlwind tour, you should spend 2-3 hours. Make sure not to miss the Imperial Garden. Independent travelers with only a couple of hours to spare should purchase a guidebook or arrange for a tour.

Evening Attractions

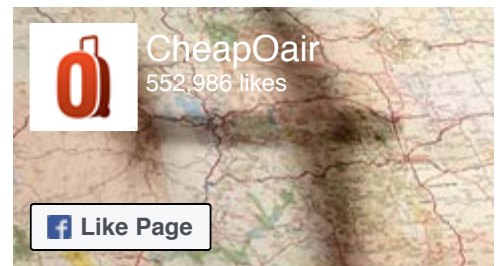
Performances abound in Beijing! Acrobat fans can reserve seats at the Chaoyang Theater or Tiandi Theatre. The Red Theatre offers an action-packed Kung Fu show designed for tourists. Check the [National Centre for Performing Arts](#) schedule for concert and opera dates.



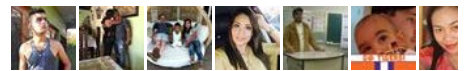
MONTH STORIES



VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



Be the first of your friends to like this



Tip #1: Avoid the tourist traps and squares for meals out.





Image via Sandy Bornstein

DAY TWO

Hike the Great Wall of China near the Juyongguan (Juyong) Pass

Even though its intimidating appearance didn't completely prevent enemies from entering China, the Great Wall became a psychological barrier between China and everyone else. Parts of the Great Wall have been restored, but climbers need to be aware of missing steps, uneven surfaces and varying step heights. We recommend arriving early to avoid the massive crowds and the heat in the warmer months. Time and physical stamina will dictate how far one can trek. This access point to the Great Wall is approximately 40 miles from the central part of Beijing. Aspiring photographers, be warned: pollution and sandstorms may wreck havoc on photo opportunities.

Summer Palace

A visit to the Summer Palace opens the door to 18th century Chinese royal life, when the palace was a lavish home to the royalty of the day. The rolling terrain covers more than one square mile and includes an enormous lake that takes up a majority of the property. Take time to admire the craftsmanship inside the Long Corridor and adjacent marble boat. A Kunming Lake boat ride will provide a panoramic view of the structures and terrain that encircle the lake.



How to Save on Food Whi

TRAVEL QUIZZES



QUIZ: Which Music Festival Should You Attend?

Are you ready for festival season? That's right, it's almost upon us. If you still haven't gotten one of those...



QUIZ: What Kind of



Rickshaw Tour of Historic Beijing

Toward the end of the day, take a bicycle-driven rickshaw ride through the narrow streets of one of Beijing's remaining hutong neighborhoods. One of these vestiges of an earlier era is located near the Drum and Bell Towers. Some tours include a visit with a family inside their courtyard residence. Although there may be a heavy dose of propaganda infused into the tour, it's worth taking to see how most Chinese people lived before Beijing became inundated with high-rise buildings.

RESTAURANTS TO TRY

While in Beijing, take time to savor the local cuisine. For a special Peking duck treat eat at **Duck de Chine** in the Sanlitun neighborhood. An interpreter will not be needed since an English menu is available.

More adventuresome souls who can't leave Beijing without eating Sichuan can try their luck communicating at **Chuan Ban**. It is located in a provincial government office.

Chinese dumplings are found throughout the city. **Baoyuan Dumplings** has a novel approach. Their rainbow dumplings are dyed with different colored vegetables and fruits.

Some diners may be in the mood for something other than the local cuisine. If Mexican food is your top choice, then check out **The Taco Bar**. This English-friendly restaurant offers fusion-style tacos.

Another English-friendly restaurant is **Great Leap Brewing**. Although there are several locations, we recommend the one in Sanlitun on Chunxiu Lu. Beer and burgers are the main draw.

Adventure Traveler Are You?

There are so many different ways to get outdoors -- whether you simply fancy a walk in the park or have your eye set on...



QUIZ: Which Island Is Your Perfect Winter Getaway?

We might be loving the crisp weather and new snow right now, but give it a couple weeks -- after all that holiday cheer...



A Few Final Tips...

- American citizens will need to apply for a Chinese visa prior to departure.
- Be prepared for Beijing's poor air quality.
- Due to time constraints and traffic delays, visits may be limited.
- Crowds may obstruct some photo opportunities.
- Be ready for squat toilets and consider carrying extra tissues.
- Access to some internet sites may be restricted or not possible.



If you've traveled to [Beijing](#) recently, let us know any itinerary

recommendations that we may have left out!

SHARE ON:

Like 1.1K



ONE RESPONSE

Joanne petersen

November 23, 2016

I loved it, i really hope I am fortunate enough to return!

REPLY

LEAVE A REPLY

Your email address will not be published.

Comment

Name*

Email*

Website

[beijing](#)
[BJS](#)
[China](#)
[PEK](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sandy Bornstein

Sandy Bornstein lived as an expat in India. Her award-winning memoir, *May This Be the Best Year of Your Life*, highlights what she learned as the only American teacher at an international Bangalore school. After living abroad, Sandy continues to explore the world and write about her travels. You can follow Sandy's adventures at www.sandrabornstein.com.

RELATED POSTS

Top Places Any
REAL The Walking
Dead Fan Should
Visit

Go South With Your
Tax Refund: Why a
Trip to Mexico Is the
Best Place to Spend
Your Dinero!

TAGS

California

CheapOair
Owards

RECENT POSTS

Discover the
Caribbean Island
with a Carnival
Festival Your Entire
Family Will Love

Ditch the Poncho

SIGN UP FOR THE CHEAPOAIR NEWSLETTER!

POPULAR

- Looking for a Unique & Authentic Travel Experience? Volunteer Abroad
- Meet the Blogger Who "Travels While Crip"
- Uruguay: The Overlooked Beachy Paradise of South