

great wall cycle challenge, china



The Great Wall of China was originally constructed to keep out nomadic tribes who raided China's northern frontier. As you ride alongside the Great Wall, your imagination will take you back several centuries to when the wall was the frontline defence of Imperial China.

Your cycling challenge starts in the village of Yanqing, north of Beijing city. Each day you will cycle approximately 50kms - 90kms in the shadows of the Great Wall, visiting ancient Ming Tombs and Black Dragon Pools National Park along the way.

This incredibly scenic challenge covers a route along one of the world's best known UNESCO World Heritage Sites. It is a demanding yet rewarding expedition, as you enjoy the vast and beautiful mountain ranges all around and witness the rural life of northern China from your saddle.

On completion of your challenge you will return to Beijing to explore some of the many attractions of China's capital: the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven and the Lama Temple.

Day 1: International Departure

Meet at the Airport for your flight to Beijing, China. Our Charity Challenge representative will be there to assist you with the check-in and any last minute questions. You will be passing over the Great Wall before landing at Beijing airport.

Day 2: Beijing to Start of Cycle

Upon arrival in Beijing you will be met at the airport by a Charity Challenge local agent who will transfer you (2hrs) to your hotel in Yanqing, north of Beijing. After

check in, you will have the rest of the afternoon to relax and have a bike fitting. In the evening after dinner, you will be given a challenge briefing and have the opportunity to ask any questions of your expedition leader. Overnight in hotel in Yanqing.

Day 3: Yanqing to Changping via Ming Tombs - approx 50kms cycle

Today is a good warm up day beginning with a flat road followed by a winding, hilly road undulating for 20kms. You head towards the valley of Mount Heavenly Longevity, where 13 tombs containing the remains of emperors, empresses and concubines were buried between 1409-1644. From there, 50kms northwest of Beijing you will reach the Ming Tombs, the name given to the mausoleums of 13 emperors of the Ming Dynasty. The mausoleums have been perfectly preserved. Due to its long history and palatial architecture, the site has a high cultural and historic value. The layout and arrangement of all thirteen mausoleums is very similar but vary in size as well as in the complexity of their structures. After your visit you will continue along the road for 10kms to Changping where you will have dinner and overnight.



Day 4: Changping to Huairou County, front side of the Great Wall of Mutianyu – 70kms

This morning you will cycle back to the Ming Tombs, and then head up hill until you see the Great Wall at Huanghuacheng. Located at Huanghuacheng town, Huanghuacheng Great Wall is 60kms from Beijing City and 29kms southwest of Huairou County. This section of Great Wall has a total length of 10,800m and is connected to Mutianyu Great Wall in the east, and Juyongguan Pass and Badaling in the west. In the summertime, all the buildings in Huanghuacheng will be buried in layers of yellow flowers known as Huanghua which is where Huanghuacheng Great Wall got its name from. You will continue along winding hilly roads through stunning scenery with the Great Wall stretching along the top of the hills creating a spectacular backdrop for your journey. Your ride will take you through the town of Huairou, location of the NGO World Women's Conference in 1995. The route continues uphill slightly to your lodge on the front side of the Great Wall Mutianyu.



Day 5: Huairou to Miyun Reservoir – 85kms

Your challenge today heads along a quiet hilly road until you get to the northern end of Yunmengshan Mountain. From the highest point at 860m you will see a river flowing through the valley. Your ride today circles the canyon until you return to the Black Dragon Pools National Park, from where you start descending to your overnight lodge by the Mountain of Five Towers and Miyun Reservoir.



Day 6: Miyun to Great Wall of Simatai – 70kms

Your cycle today begins with a hilly road followed by a quiet country road through local villages. You will witness rural life typical of northern China. As you complete your day you arrive into the Simatai area. To

the east of the Jinshanling stretch of the Great Wall lies the quiet and remote Simatai section of the wall. Unlike the section at Mutianyu that has undergone extensive restoration, the wall at Simatai has received very little attention. The ruinous state of this part of the Wall gives it an air of authenticity that has earned it the reputation of being the most beautiful section of the Great Wall. Here, the wall really looks as one would expect it to have looked some 500 years after it was built during the Ming Dynasty. The local people are proud of this monument and claim that it was as a consequence of visiting Simatai that UNESCO was convinced the Wall should be listed as a World Heritage site. It towers over the nearby villages and farmland as it winds its way like the spiny back of a dragon over the sharply clipped peaks of the mountains. You will cycle for a further 10kms, arriving at your overnight lodge at the foot of the Wall.

Day 7: Great Wall of Simatai to Great Wall of Huangyaguan – 98kms

Today you cycle along a mountain road, up and down three hills to meet the Great Wall again. This section of the Wall runs on the ridge of mountains to the north of Ji County; Tianjin. Part of the cultural heritage of the world, it was initially built in the Northern Qi Dynasty (550-577) and later renovated and lengthened in the Sui Dynasty (581-618) and again during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The ancient Great Wall of this section had a length of 42kms, but it suffered extensive damage throughout its long history. In 1987, it was repaired and was opened to tourists. The Huangyaguan Great Wall has two sections: Huangyaguan and Taipingzhai. Overnight at a lodge by the Wall.

Day 8: Huangyaguan to Pinggu County - 40kms

This morning you will cycle along the road until it meets with Jinhai Lake. From there you ride a further 9kms along a relatively flat road (a welcome relief after yesterday's long ride) to the centre of Pinggu where you will have completed your cycling challenge! You will then transfer (1.5hrs) back to your hotel in Beijing.

Day 9: Full Day City Tour of Beijing

As a reward for all your hard work, a day of leisure follows with a guided tour of the many attractions of China's capital city, including the Old Imperial Palace known as the Forbidden City & Tiananmen Square as well as the Temple of Heaven where the emperors worshipped god and prayed for good harvests. Later you will be dropped off at the market to shop for souvenirs. Your celebratory dinner will be the Peking Duck Banquet. Overnight hotel, Beijing.



Day 10: Arrive Home

After breakfast, you will have a few hours to explore, before being transferred to Beijing airport for the return to London Heathrow.

N.B. The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

optional beijing extension

Day 10: City Tour

You will be met by your guide after breakfast and will start today's sightseeing with a visit to the Summer Palace which includes a short lake cruise. Being one of China's largest and best preserved imperial gardens dating back over 300 years, the Summer Palace used to be the place where the imperial families spent their summers. From here, you will drive to the Bird's Nest stadium where you will have the opportunity to take a look inside this incredible structure, so called due to its elliptical latticework which likens it to a gigantic bird's nest. Taking 5 years to complete, it was the main venue for the 2008 Olympic Games. After lunch (included) you will continue to the Lama Temple built in the 17th century, which still acts today as a Tibetan Buddhist temple. Here you will be surprised by the 18-meter-high Maitreya Buddha statue sculptured out of a piece of 26-meter-long log of sandal wood. Dinner is not included today to offer you the chance to sample your own choice of local cuisine!).



Day 11: City Tour

In the morning, you will be collected for a Hutong Tour in a rickshaw along old Beijing's small allies (known as hutong), up to Drum Tower. The Hutong Tour is the best way to see traditional life in Beijing. Here you will find many square courtyards, most of which were privately owned in the old times. The inhabitants of Old Beijing had their square courtyards built in the Hutongs as a symbol of wealth. Now most courtyards have been torn down however the area you are going to see has been very well-preserved, reminding you of the city's spacious culture. After lunch, you can be dropped off at the shopping area upon request, where the guide will be at your service. Once you've spent all you can, you will be treated to dinner at a fine restaurant.

Day 12: International Departure

After breakfast, you will have a few hours to yourself, before being transferred to Beijing airport for the return flight to London Heathrow.

Cost: £210 per person sharing (based on 4 or more people in twin accommodation)

Single Supp: £55 (NB: there must be a minimum of 4 persons for this extension to run)

optional xian extension

Day 10: Terracotta Warriors & Xian Grand Mosque

Transfer from your hotel in Beijing to the airport for morning flight to Xian. Once the largest city in the world and capital for 11 dynasties, Xian is a favourite destination for travellers to China, due, in no small part, to the 1974 discovery of 6000 life-sized terracotta soldiers, warriors and horses which were created over 2200 years ago to guard the tomb of the first emperor in China's history Qin Shihuang. Upon arrival, transfer to the Terracotta Museum. Lunch and dinner are included today and in the evening you get the chance to enjoy a Tang Dynasty cultural show. Overnight hotel.

Day 11: Yangling Tomb & Afternoon in Beijing

After breakfast visit to the Yangling Tomb of Han Dynasty dating back 2,000 years which is still an ongoing archaeological project. In the afternoon, you will fly back to Beijing and transfer to your overnight hotel.

Day 12: Morning in Beijing, Afternoon Flight to UK

Depart for international flight back to the UK arriving the same day.

Cost: £335 per person sharing (based on 4 or more people in twin accommodation)

Single Supp: £60 (NB: there must be a minimum of 4

If you would like to book the above extension or have any extension enquiries please call the Charity Challenge office on 020 8557 0000 or email flights@charitychallenge.com. All bookings are subject to availability and group booking limitations. We therefore ask you to consider your travel plans as soon as possible and if you want to extend your challenge, please put in your request

persons for this extension to run)