CHINA | SAMPLE ITINERARY

Great Wall of China Trek - North Devon Hospice

China is a vast, exhilarating collision of ancient civilisation and rapid modernity. Beyond the gleaming skyline of Beijing lie the rugged northern ranges, where winding mountain ridges carry thousands of years of imperial history, folklore, and defensive stonework etched straight into the peaks.

DAYS	CULTURE SHOCK	CHALLENGE
9	4/5	4/5

Help

China







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Stepping into this dramatic landscape challenges you to push beyond your familiar comfort zone. Trekking along ancient ramparts, navigating quiet rural farming settlements, and experiencing a culture so rich in ritual and resilience turns this journey into a truly unforgettable expedition.

Terrain

The route traverses dramatic limestone mountain ridges, steep passes, and jagged mountain spines. Underfoot, the terrain shifts from ancient, uneven stone steps and crumbling ramparts to rugged wilderness trails, dense brush, and exposed paved ridgelines.

Weather

Spring and autumn deliver ideal trekking conditions with bright blue skies, fresh mountain breezes, and low humidity. Days are generally warm and dry for walking, though temperatures can drop swiftly in mountain hamlets once the sun dips below the ridgelines.

Culture

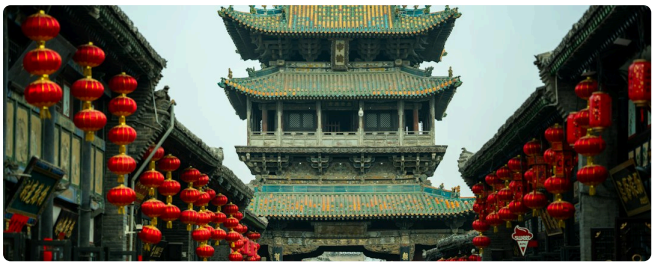
Daily life in northern China is rooted in deep historical traditions, filial respect, and vibrant communal gatherings. From bustling tea houses and quiet dawn tai chi in public parks to the warmth of rural village hospitality, community connection underpins every interaction. Food is central to culture, where dining is an energetic, shared experience marked by steaming family-style dishes and time-honoured culinary customs.

↑ Amazing experiences

- Trek from Chenjiapu across ancient Badaling ramparts
- Traverse mountain ridgelines from Gubeikou to Jinshanling
- Conquer the steep ascent up Beijing Tower
- Scramble wild, unrestored ruins at Lupiguan
- Master traditional handmade dumplings in rural Jianxia
- Explore the Forbidden City and atmospheric hutongs

China

Of course, every expedition is different, and we work with you to create your perfect adventure. With China as your destination the opportunities for adventure are countless.



Experience a very different culture

Immerse yourself in everyday northern life by staying in rural guest houses in Gubeikou and Jianxia, trading busy urban rhythms for quiet mountain hospitality. You will master traditional dumpling making alongside local hosts and discover Beijing's living heritage by wandering the intricate maze of ancient hutongs, watching neighbours play street chess and observing historic courtyard traditions.



Explore a new landscape

Leave the plains behind to hike along wild, undulating mountain spines, taking on rough, nature-reclaimed stone pathways from Chenjiapu to the wild scramble at Lupiguan. You will traverse the rugged spine connecting Gubeikou to Jinshanling, navigating steep, crumbling watchtowers and breathtaking sheer drops across this dramatic geological frontier.



Be part of a global community

Connect with local farming communities in northern mountain villages, sharing home-cooked communal meals at Yeshufang and celebrating your summit ascent over a traditional farmer's lunch. By showing humility, learning customs, and sharing stories across language barriers, your team builds real bonds of mutual respect with the rural families welcoming you.



Learn something important

Gain an authentic perspective on centuries of frontier defence, architectural mastery, and imperial rule as you walk sections built during the Ming dynasty. From the silent, atmospheric watchtowers of Jinshanling to the monumental architecture of Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, and the Temple of Heaven, you will examine China's enduring cultural identity firsthand.

China

DESTINATION FACTS

LANGUAGES	Mandarin Chinese	**RELIGION**	Buddhism, Taoism, folk traditions, non-religious
GEOGRAPHY	Rugged mountain ridgelines, fertile northern valleys, sprawling imperial plains	**CLIMATE**	Continental monsoon; hot summers, crisp clear autumns, cold dry winters
AVG TEMP	12°C to 28°C (trekking seasons spring/autumn)	**ALTITUDE**	Up to 1,000m (Beijing Tower ridge)
CULTURAL INTEREST	Imperial dynastic history, traditional Beijing hutongs, regional culinary arts	**VISA***	Required

* Requirements may change

Why this expedition

CULTURAL DIFFERENCE FROM HOME

4/5

Very different

CHALLENGE & DIFFICULTY

4/5

Tough

Why go with True Adventure

True Adventure brings extensive mountain expertise and an uncompromising safety management network to remote sections of the Great Wall. By partnering with experienced, vetted local trail guides who know every loose stone between Lupiguan and Jinshanling, we ensure our teams navigate unrestored ridgelines safely, mindfully, and with absolute confidence.

Our expeditions are purposefully designed to build resilience and genuine independence. Small group sizes allow for meaningful engagement within village communities like Gubeikou, while our dedicated leaders empower individuals to step into leadership roles, support their peers on demanding ascents, and reflect deeply on the historical landscapes they journey through.

FROM OUR VENTURERS

> ***Scrambling over the wild, unrestored bricks at Lupiguan was totally unreal. It was tough work on the legs, but reaching Jinshanling and folding dumplings together in the guest house made every steep step worth it.***
>
> - CHARITY SUPPORTER

> ***The climb up to Beijing Tower pushed us all to dig deep, but standing on top looking out over the mountain ridges was incredible. Exploring the hutongs and tasting authentic Peking duck finished off an epic expedition.***
>
> - STUDENT

FROM TEACHERS & LEADERS

> ***The contrast between the challenging ridgeline trekking and the warmth of the village stays gave the students a genuine test of character. True Adventure's logistics and local guides handled the remote terrain seamlessly.***
>
> - EXPEDITION LEADER

> ***Watching our team support each other up the crumbling stairways between Gubeikou and Jinshanling was a highlight of my teaching career. The physical challenge and cultural immersion were balanced with immaculate safety protocols.***
>
> - HEAD OF OUTDOOR LEARNING



DAYS 1–2

Arrival in Beijing and Foothills of Badaling

Hiking Travel

Sleep: Hotel **Meals:** Half Board

Touching down in Beijing marks the start of an extraordinary expedition into northern China's rugged frontier. You will leave the immediate hum of the capital behind, travelling towards the jagged mountain peaks surrounding Badaling where the historic defensive wall stands watch. Checking into your hotel, there is time to unpack, freshen up, and get your bearings before the team convenes.

Your expedition leader will bring the group together for a detailed briefing covering the days ahead. You will walk through the route plan, discuss mountain safety and hydration, and ensure all trekking kit is primed for the varied ridge trails. Over your first dinner together, you will start tasting the rich regional flavours of northern China while planning team roles for the week. An early night ensures everyone is fully rested for the first demanding trail day.

> **DID YOU KNOW?**
> ANCIENT INGENUITY — Ming dynasty builders mixed sticky rice into the mortar to make the Great Wall earthquake-proof.

Staying at: Hotel in Badaling

HIGHLIGHTS

Airport Transfer to Badaling - Touch down in China's capital and journey out through the city limits towards the mountains of Badaling. Settle into your hotel and take in the dramatic ridgelines flanking the valley.

Expedition Briefing - Gather with your expedition leaders for a detailed overview of the mountain terrain, trail expectations, and safety guidelines for the days ahead. Check over your daypacks and trail gear.



DAY 01

Chenjiapu to Badaling Ancient Wall Trek

Hiking Rest

Sleep: Hotel **Meals:** Full Board

Your trek begins today on the dramatic stonework of the Chenjiapu section, leading along rugged ridgelines toward the ancient ramparts of Badaling. You will step onto stone pathways laid down centuries ago, climbing over weathered watchtowers and navigating crumbling stairs that trace the natural crest of the mountains. The walking is energetic and physically demanding, testing your stamina across five to seven hours of sustained ascent and descent.

Around you, sweeping views stretch across jagged valleys and terraced hillsides, showing how Ming Dynasty engineers adapted their fortifications to natural topography. You will pause along the battlements for lunch and water stops, soaking up the quiet scale of the wild stone ruins. Returning to your hotel base in Badaling, you will have time to stretch, review the day's achievements with the team, and refuel over a hearty dinner.

Staying at: Hotel in Badaling

HIGHLIGHTS

Great Wall Chenjiapu to Badaling Ancient Wall Trek - Hike from the historic watchtowers of Chenjiapu along crumbling stone ramparts to the ancient battlements of Badaling. Tackle steep staircases and uneven masonry while taking in expansive mountain vistas.

Post-Hike Recovery in Badaling - Travel back to your base in Badaling to rest tired legs, rehydrate, and log your trekking reflections from the day's ridge walk before dinner.





DAY 04

Wild Wall Scramble at Lupiguan to Gubeikou

Hiking | Cultural | Travel

Sleep: Homestay **Meals:** Full Board

Today takes you deeper into the wilder, unrestored sections of the Great Wall at Lupiguan. After an early transfer through rural mountain valleys, you will hit the trail where nature has spent centuries reclaiming the stonework. This is not manicured masonry; it is a raw path where saplings sprout through floor stones, battlements lean against jagged limestone crags, and the path follows steep natural ridges.

Navigating this terrain requires focus and teamwork, as steps are irregular and loose stone demands careful foot placement. The rewards are immense, offering pristine vistas across quiet mountain valleys with almost no other hikers in sight. By mid-afternoon, you will descend towards the historic frontier village of Gubeikou, checking into the family-run Yeshufang Guest House. Here, you will experience authentic rural hospitality, sharing stories over a traditional village dinner.

DID YOU KNOW?

TRUE STORY — Lupiguan gets its name because its striped granite cliffs resemble the patterning of deer skin.

Staying at: Yeshufang Guest House

HIGHLIGHTS

Transfer to Lupiguan - Drive eastward through mountain valleys towards the remote Lupiguan section, watching the landscapes shift into wilder, untamed terrain.

Lupiguan Wild Great Wall Hike - Scramble along untouched, unrestored masonry winding through high crags and scrubland. Experience the authentic atmosphere of the wild wall away from visitor crowds.

Rural Village Welcome in Gubeikou - Arrive at the rural settlement of Gubeikou and settle into the family-run Yeshufang Guest House for an evening of local hospitality and home-cooked food.



DAYS 5–6

Gubeikou to Jinshanling Trek and Dumpling Making

Hiking | Cultural

Sleep: Homestay **Meals:** Full Board

Over these two days, you will tackle one of the most iconic traverses of northern China, hiking along the spine of the mountains from Gubeikou into Jinshanling. Day four is a substantial seven-hour endurance trek across rugged terrain, linking broken watchtowers and winding across exposed mountain passes. You will witness the stark transition between crumbling wild ruins and the dramatic, well-preserved battlements of Jinshanling, finishing at the welcoming Jianxia Guest House.

The following morning offers a contrasting three-hour hike across restored fifteenth-century sections of Jinshanling. Here, high-spec military architecture comes alive with double-decked towers, barrier walls, and preserved arrow slits. After completing the morning trek, you will return to your village base for a well-earned rest and a hands-on culinary workshop. The family running the guest house will teach you the art of rolling dumpling wrappers, preparing savory fillings, and pleating each parcel before steaming

DID YOU KNOW?

WILD — Jinshanling features sixty-seven watchtowers, each built with a completely unique architectural design to confuse invaders.

Staying at: Jianxia Guest House

HIGHLIGHTS

Epic Gubeikou to Jinshanling Traverse - Take on an ambitious seven-hour traverse along the jagged spine of the wall from Gubeikou to Jinshanling, exploring ancient guard posts and dramatic ridge steps.

Fifteenth-Century Jinshanling Wall Trek - Hike the restored fifteenth-century ramparts of Jinshanling over three hours, marvelling at defensive military towers, shooting holes, and steep stairways.

Hands-On Dumpling Masterclass - Join your local hosts in the guest house kitchen to mix fillings, roll dough wrappers, and crimp traditional Chinese dumplings to cook for dinner.









DAYS 7–8

Beijing Tower Climb and Imperial City Wonders

Hiking | Cultural

Sleep: Hotel **Meals:** Full Board

Day six begins with the ultimate trekking challenge of the expedition, ascending from a mountain foothill village straight up to Beijing Tower. This is the steepest and most demanding climb of the week, rewarding your grit with panoramic views across the endless defensive ridges. After summiting, you will hike down to a local farmer's house for an authentic lunch celebrating the completion of your wall trek, before driving back to central Beijing to check into the Dong Fang Hotel.

Day seven shifts focus to China's rich imperial history and buzzing metropolitan life. You will explore Tiananmen Square before entering the red walls and golden roofs of the Forbidden City, wandering through courtyards where emperors once ruled. In the afternoon, explore the tranquil parklands and iconic circular altar of the Temple of Heaven,

> **DID YOU KNOW?**
> SKY HIGH — Beijing Tower perches at nearly a kilometre above sea level, originally built to spot incoming Mongol cavalry.

Staying at: Dong Fang Hotel

HIGHLIGHTS

Summit Ascent to Beijing Tower - Climb from a mountain village up steep, punishing trails to reach Beijing Tower, the highest and most physically challenging peak on your expedition.

Celebratory Farmer's Lunch - Gather at a local farmer's home at the base of the mountain to share a celebratory rural meal, marking the successful end of your Great Wall trekking challenge.

Tiananmen Square and Forbidden City Exploration - Visit Tiananmen Square and pass through the Meridian Gate into the vast courtyards, painted pavilions, and imperial halls of the Forbidden City.

Temple of Heaven, Markets, and Peking Duck Dinner - Wander the serene parklands of the Temple of Heaven, explore lively local market stalls, and conclude the day with a celebratory Roast Peking duck banquet.





DAY 09

Beijing City Discovery and Departure

Cultural | Travel

Meals: B&B

If your flight allows you will have the freedom to explore the vibrant streetscapes of Beijing at your own pace. Wander through narrow hutong alleyways where residents play chess on corners and neighbourhood life unfolds outside historic courtyard homes. You can pick up handcrafted souvenirs, sample street-side tea, or take in a quiet urban park before preparing for departure.

Later in the day, the group will gather back at the Dong Fang Hotel to collect luggage and share final reflections on the expedition. You will board the group transfer to the airport together, heading homeward with strong memories of mountain ridges, ancient stone towers, and shared team triumphs across the Great Wall of China.

DID YOU KNOW?

LIVING HISTORY — Beijing hutongs date back to the thirteenth-century Yuan dynasty, named after the Mongolian word for water well.

HIGHLIGHTS

Independent Exploration in Beijing - Use your final morning and afternoon to explore historic hutong laneways, pick up mementoes in neighbourhood shops, or relax in a traditional tea house.

Airport Transfer and Homeward Bound - Reconvene at the hotel, gather your expedition packs, and take the group transfer out to Beijing airport for your homeward journey.

READY FOR ADVENTURE

Every day is a chance to step outside your comfort zone, connect with new cultures and discover what you're truly capable of.

TRUE ADVENTURE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NORTH DEVON HOSPICE

Any Questions – please contact us at **support@true-adventure.co.uk**
or call **01730 812 742**