

Acorns Children's Hospice: Great Wall of China Trek 2025

10 - 18 May 2025



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Registered office: Drakes Court, Alcester Road, Wythall, Birmingham B47 6JR.



acorns
Your local children's hospice

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Trip overview

China

China is a giant country which boasts beaches, jungles, huge mountains, wildlife, architectural heritage and fascinating culture. 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.

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. You will find ancient architecture next to high-rise buildings and fast food restaurants; you will find 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 delicious cuisine so take your time to explore the restaurants, sampling Peking duck, dumplings, noodles and much more.

The Great Wall

The Great Wall of China is the longest man-made structure on the planet. The Wall was built, rebuilt and maintained from as early as the 7th Century BC to protect the Chinese empire from invaders. It stretches approximately 8850 km (5500 miles) across the rolling hills of northern China to the sea. Many sections of the Wall are unrestored, scarred by battles of the past. A visit to the Great Wall is an opportunity to step back into history and marvel at the ingenuity and tenacity of the Chinese dynasties and the millions of soldiers who defended their land.

Trek overview

This trek takes you to a remote section of the Great Wall of China, from Gubeikou to Jinshanling and 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 authentic Chinese culture as you discover more about the lifestyle of the local people and also taste some incredible local cuisine.

For more information please contact Kate Vousden at events@acorns.org.uk or call 01564 825 037

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What is the experience like?

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, a Different Travel Company UK tour manager and a representative from Acorns Children's Hospice.

How tough is it?

The trek is rated moderate to challenging. There are many steep uphill and downhill sections to contend with and you must be prepared to carry a daypack weighing 6-7kg. Although the distances trekked may appear short, due to the hilly terrain it can take 6-7 hours to trek just 5km, as ascent and descent profile each day ranges from 515m-866m.

What is the terrain like?

The terrain is hilly and undulating with steep sections. 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 ground underfoot from the 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. 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 hills.

What kind of food will we eat?

The trek day will start with a breakfast of hot drinks, noodles, rice, eggs, Chinese dumplings and fruit. You will prepare your own packed lunch each day which will consist of sandwiches with jam or peanut butter, fresh fruit, Oreos (or similar), dried fruit and nuts etc. You should bring your own snacks to eat throughout the day.

A freshly cooked traditional Chinese evening meal will be served at the guesthouse comprising rice, noodles, meat, tofu and vegetable dishes.

Where will we stay?

During your nights in Beijing you will stay in hotels, and each night during the trek you will stay in local guesthouses. Rooms are allocated on a twin or triple share basis.

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Practical information

Is there an age limit?

You must be 18+ to join this trek. It may be possible for you to participate if you are 16 or 17 years old if accompanied by a parent or guardian. There is no upper age limit.

Who can take part?

An ideal candidate for the trek would be someone who enjoys being out of their comfort zone and trying something new. Adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected so do not 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.

How fit do I need to be?

You should have a good level of fitness to ensure fast recovery from each day of trekking.

How should I prepare?

You must engage in training (including plenty of walking up and down hills) before departure to ensure your best chance of enjoyment on the trip. This could include hill walking, running, cycling, gym workouts, boot camps, etc. You can download a number of free apps to help you train and track your progress e.g. MapMyWalk, C25K, MyFitnessPal etc. Attempting to complete the trek without training will make it more challenging than necessary and will be detrimental to your experience, and the experience of your teammates.



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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 specified. All your medical details are treated in the strictest confidence.

The information will be securely screened by a qualified medical professional, and details provided to your tour manager and local guides so our staff are adequately informed and prepared to support you during the trip. By completing our booking form you are giving consent for us to contact you confidentially with any follow up questions regarding your health.

If you declare any medical conditions you may be asked to provide more information, or we may request to contact your GP.

In the event that your medical issues at the time of booking represent a concern for your safety and wellbeing, or the safety and wellbeing of others in the group, you may be recommended not to take part. If this happens your booking will not be confirmed and the deposit will be refunded.

We must be informed if any conditions or medication change, or if new conditions develop. If necessary confirmation of fitness to travel from your GP or specialist may be required.

Please note that we will never unreasonably deny participation on a trip nor contravene the Equality Act 2010.

Health and Safety Assurance

Your health and safety is our top priority so rest assured that we are taking steps to ensure you not only have a memorable experience, but a safe one too.

We constantly monitor and follow the advice of the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) who provide recommendations and advice to British travellers about travel to a certain destination.

Health and safety is our top priority so we will NEVER operate a trip in an area where there is clear and present risk to our team members, whether that is due to a health outbreak, political instability, natural disasters or anything else.

If travel restrictions either in the UK or China prevent safe travel we will look to either postpone or cancel your trip at no cost to you.

Please note that at the time of travel there may be enhanced safety and security measures in airports, bag drop may take longer, and you may need to provide a certificate of health or proof of vaccination.

We will inform you about any information pertinent to your travel arrangements.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us on info@different-travel.com.



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Trip cost

A **£395 registration fee** is payable at the time of booking and then, with the support of the fundraising team, you are asked **to fundraise £3,500 for Acorns Children's Hospice**.

A minimum fundraising target of £2,000 must be paid to the charity by 1 November 2024, £3,000 by 1 February 2025 and £3,500 by 1 June 2025.

Trip Includes:

- ✓ Return flights from London (inc. airport taxes)
- ✓ All transport in China
- ✓ Accommodation (hotel in Beijing for 3 nights, guesthouses on trek for 4 nights)
- ✓ Meals
- ✓ English-speaking guides and support crew
- ✓ Trek permits
- ✓ UK Different Travel tour manager.

Trip Does Not Include:

- ✗ Chinese visa (current cost £150-175)
- ✗ Personal expenses (e.g. drinks, souvenirs, etc.)
- ✗ Vaccinations
- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Tips (approx. £40-45 per person)
- ✗ Trek kit and equipment



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Itinerary

Day 1 (Saturday 10 May 2025):

London to Beijing

Fly to Beijing on an overnight flight.

Day 2 (Sunday 11 May 2025): Beijing

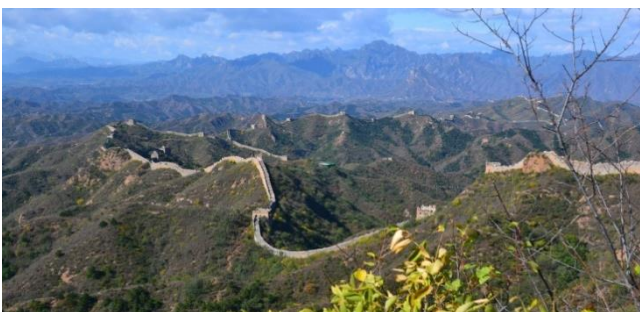
Arrive in Beijing and check into a central hotel in time for a group dinner and a briefing on the week ahead. If time permits, why not explore the maze of alleys (hutongs) where you will find traditional houses, small local shops and other wonders. *Meals: Dinner.*



Day 3 (Monday 12 May 2025):

Beijing to Gubeikou

Today we transfer by bus to the Great Wall (approx. 3 hours). After lunch we start our trek, winding our way uphill to reach an ancient and original section of the Great Wall, 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. 9km. Total ascent: 515 meters. 3-4 hours. *Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner.*



Day 4 (Tuesday 13 May 2025): Gubeikou

This morning we transfer from our guesthouse to explore the Gubeikou section. This area 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. The majority of the trek today is along a part of the wall which is almost completely worn away and the terrain underfoot is rugged and uneven.

We return to the guesthouse tonight.

Trekking approx. 11km. Total ascent: 709 meters. 6-7 hours.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner.



Day 5 (Wednesday 14 May 2025):

Gubeikou to 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 Jinshanling. Trekking approx. 15.4km. Total ascent: 866 meters. 6-7 hours.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner.

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Day 6 (Thursday 15 May 2025): Jinshanling to 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 the incredible effort in building the wall and the meticulous attention to detail, tactical wisdom, and subtle beauty in its construction. We descend through the forest and return to our guesthouse.

Trekking approx. 8km. Total ascent: 697 meters. 7 hours.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner.



Day 8 (Saturday 17 May 2025): Beijing

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

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner.

Day 9 (Sunday 18 May 2025): Beijing to London

Transfer to the airport for the return flight to London which may arrive the following day (Monday 19 May 2025) depending on flight schedules.

Meals: Breakfast.



Day 7 (Friday 16 May 2025): Simatai to Beijing

After breakfast we transfer to the start of our half-day trek through the forest to a remote and rarely visited watch tower at the top of a hill. After enjoying the views from the top we descend on the same trail through the forest where we meet our vehicles which transfer us to our lunch spot and a final farewell to our trek support team. After lunch we drive back to Beijing (approx. 3-4 hours).

Trekking approx. 6km. Total ascent: 539 meters. 4-5 hours.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner.



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

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Kit List – Great Wall of China

The kit you take on your trek can make the difference between being 'just a trek' or a 'memorable trek'. Our kit lists are put together with feedback from our own experiences and that of participants who have taken part in our previous trips.

The items on this list do not take into account your personal preferences based on your previous trekking experiences, or individual requirements.

PLEASE NOTE: This list is just a guideline and is not exhaustive or take into account personal preferences.

For information about items on this list please refer to the trip dossier or contact The Different Travel Company on info@different-travel.com

*Please consider eco-friendly or biodegradable options.

ESSENTIAL SUGGESTED OPTIONAL

DOCUMENTS & flight essentials	✓
Passport + copy	
E-Tickets + pre departure info	
Chinese visa	
Travel insurance	
ATM and credit card (s)	
Cash (£ Sterling)	
Pen for immigration forms	
Sunglasses (preferably polarized)	
Mobile phone + charger	
Camera + spare batteries	

LUGGAGE	✓
Suitcase/large holdall for flight	
Kit bag for trek	
Daypack (25 – 30 litres)	
Hand Luggage (take note of dimensions from airline)	
Combination padlocks	

Clothing and footwear	✓
Trekking boots: either worn on flight or carried in hand luggage	
Trek trousers	
Non-cotton, technical t-shirts	
Non-cotton long sleeved top/shirt	
Trek socks	
Underwear	
Warm fleece or sweater	
Thermal base layers (top and bottoms)	
Light-weight warm jacket (e.g. down or Primaloft)	
Waterproof jacket and trousers	
Light poncho (can be bought locally)	
Thermal base layer trousers and top	
Sun hat with brim	
Warm hat for night	
Pyjamas	
Cobber cooling neck towel/Buff	
Trainers for camp	

Health and Hygiene*	✓
Hygiene kit to include: toothbrush and toothpaste, antiperspirant deodorant, wet wipes, shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, moisturiser	
Personal first aid kit to include: prescription medicine, insect repellent, ibuprofen, paracetamol, plasters, blister plasters (e.g. Compeed), Imodium, rehydration salts (Dioralyte), indigestions remedy antiseptic cream (e.g. Savlon), Anti-histamine cream/tablets, lip balm with SPF protection, zinc oxide tape, nail scissors/tweezers, muscle rub (e.g. Deep Heat), throat lozenges, decongestant, Vaseline	
Hairbrush/comb/nail brush	
Lateral flow tests (min x 2)	
Disposable masks	
Feminine care products	

OTHER KIT	✓
Sleeping bag liner (cotton/silk)	
Sun block (high SPF)	
Toilet bag: toilet paper, wipes, hand sanitiser, nappy sacks	
2 ltr water hydration system (e.g. Camelbak)	
1 ltr water bottle	
LED head torch + spare batteries	
Adaptor (multi-prong)	
Ear plugs	
Casual clothing + shoes for travel/free days/evenings	
Hiking poles – to be stowed in hold luggage for flight	
Energy food/snack bars	
Electrolyte tablets (e.g. Nuun)	
Bags for dirty washing	
Spare glasses/contact lenses	
Video camera + charger	
MP3 player/ipod	
Portable power bank	
Books/packs of cards	

