5 Days Beijing Hutong Tour - From Ancient Beijing to Modern Beijing

Trip overview

Trace the captivating evolution of China's capital from imperial dynasties to a gleaming modern metropolis on this **5-Day Beijing Hutong Tour**, a private cultural journey pairing iconic UNESCO World Heritage landmarks with authentic neighborhood life. Walk in the footsteps of emperors across **Tian'anmen Square**, the sprawling courtyards of the **Forbidden City**, the lakeside pavilions of the **Summer Palace**, and the sacred altars of the **Temple of Heaven**, before ascending the forested mountain ridges of the **Mutianyu Great Wall**. Venture deeper into Beijing's living heritage at the incense-filled **Lama Temple** and **Imperial College Museum**, then step inside historic **Dongcheng** and **Xicheng Hutongs** to chat with a local courtyard family, watch a **Drum Tower** performance, try traditional folk crafts, or glide past **Shichahai Lake** by rickshaw—contrasting centuries-old *siheyuan* lanes with futuristic skyline icons like the **Bird's Nest** and **CCTV Headquarters**.

- **Durations:** 5 Days
- **Destinations:** Beijing
- **Tour inquiry:** https://www.asiachinatour.com/5-days-beijing-hutong-tour/

Itinerary

Day 1: Beijing Arrival — Private Airport/Station Pick-up, Hotel Check-in & Evening at Leisure

Nihao! Welcome to Beijing, China's historic and vibrant capital boasting more than 3,000 years of storied imperial heritage. Upon clearing customs, baggage claim, and immigration at your arrival airport terminal or railway station exit, your private English-speaking tour guide and dedicated driver will greet you holding a personalized welcome sign. Settle into your spacious, climate-controlled vehicle for a direct, stress-free transfer to your handpicked downtown hotel, where your guide will assist with registration procedures and orient you to the immediate neighborhood.

The remainder of the day is completely free at your own pace to unwind, recover from jet lag, and

acclimate to the local time zone. If you feel energized, take a leisurely evening stroll around the surrounding streets to soak in the city's lively atmosphere, browse nearby local shops, or ask your guide for customized dining recommendations—ranging from family-friendly courtyard dumpling houses to classic Peking roast duck restaurants—tailored to your schedule and tastes.

Meals: None (On your own)

Accommodation: Handpicked Downtown Hotel in Beijing

Expert Transit & Arrival Insights:
Beijing is served by two major aviation hubs—Capital International Airport (PEK, 40–60 minutes northeast of downtown) and Daxing International Airport (PKX, 60–75 minutes south)—as well as central high-speed rail stations linking Shanghai (4.5–6 hours), Xi'an (4–5 hours), Wuhan (4–5 hours), Zhengzhou (2.5–3 hours), and Harbin (5–5.5 hours) within 25 minutes of central hotels. Your private driver tracks all flight and train schedules in real time to ensure immediate curbside greeting regardless of delays, and if you have energy for an easy introductory walk, nearby Wangfujing Pedestrian Street or Nanluoguxiang Hutong offer a vibrant first taste of Beijing evening life.

Day 2: Imperial Beijing Grandeur — Tian'anmen Square, Forbidden City, Jingshan Park & Summer Palace

Immerse yourself in the epic imperial history of China's ancient capital on a full-day guided exploration of Beijing's most iconic landmarks.

After breakfast at your hotel, meet your private English-speaking guide and driver to set out for **Tian'anmen Square**, the world's largest public gathering plaza and a defining national symbol where you can frame classic photographs of Tian'anmen Gate. Walk across the square and pass through the monumental Meridian Gate into the **Forbidden City (Palace Museum)**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the political and ceremonial heart of the Ming and Qing dynasties for nearly 500 years. Home to 24 emperors, this vast palatial "city within a city" preserves 9,999 rooms and priceless imperial art treasures along its grand central axis. Upon exiting the northern gate, take a scenic 15-minute walk up **Jingshan Park** to capture sweeping panoramic views of modern Beijing towering behind the sea of golden-glazed palace roofs.

Following lunch at a local restaurant, drive northwest to the **Summer Palace**, another UNESCO World Heritage Site celebrated as the "Museum of Royal Gardens." Originally designed as a tranquil lakeside retreat for Qing royalty escaping the summer heat, its harmonious ensemble of hilltop temples, ornate pavilions, arched stone bridges, and painted corridors frames the shimmering waters of **Kunming Lake** like a living traditional Chinese landscape painting. Enjoy a leisurely afternoon stroll along the waterfront before returning to downtown Beijing, where you may opt to cap the evening with an authentic **Peking Roasted Duck** dinner at the heritage **Quanjude** restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Handpicked Downtown Hotel in Beijing

Expert Sightseeing & Dining Insights:
Be sure to carry your original passport today, as strict security screening and real-name ticket verification are mandatory at both Tian'anmen Square and the Forbidden City. Wearing well-cushioned walking shoes will keep you comfortable across the expansive stone courtyards, the

uphill steps of Jingshan Park, and the lakeside pathways of the Summer Palace. If you would like to enjoy the optional Peking Roasted Duck dinner at Quanjude tonight, ask your guide to reserve a table in advance so you can savor freshly carved, crisp-skinned duck rolled in warm pancakes right after sightseeing.

Day 3: Sacred Imperial Rituals & Great Wall Adventure — Temple of Heaven, Mutianyu Great Wall & Olympic Park

Begin your morning after breakfast at the **Temple of Heaven**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site larger than the Forbidden City and celebrated for its harmonious cosmological layout. Built as an imperial sacrificial complex where 22 Ming and Qing emperors prayed twice annually for bountiful harvests, the sanctuary centers on the iconic triple-eaved, circular wooden **Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests**. Follow the sacred axial pathway to test the ingenious acoustic designs of the Echo Wall and Triple Sound Stones, while soaking in the lively morning atmosphere as local residents gather beneath ancient cypresses for Tai Chi, shuttlecock kicking, and traditional folk music.

Next, drive roughly 1.5 to 2 hours (73 km) north into the scenic hills of Huairou to explore the **Mutianyu Great Wall**, another UNESCO World Heritage Site and the longest fully restored section of China's ancient frontier defense. Connecting Jiankou in the west with Gubeikou in the east, Mutianyu is renowned for its 23 Ming-era watchtowers and tranquil vistas framed by dense pine and cypress forests. Ride the round-trip cable car up to the **14th Watchtower** to step directly onto the stone battlements, then hike westward along the mountain ridge. Challenge yourself on the steep climb up to the **20th Watchtower** for sweeping panoramic views of the wall snaking across mountain crests before taking the cable car back down.

Following lunch near the foothills, return to downtown Beijing and stop at the **Beijing Olympic Park** to capture exterior photographs of the **Bird's Nest (Beijing National Stadium)** and the **Water Cube (Beijing National Aquatics Center)**—architectural landmarks built for the 2008 Summer Games and reused during the 2022 Winter Olympics—before returning to your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Handpicked Downtown Hotel in Beijing

Expert Sightseeing & Great Wall Insights:
Arriving at the Temple of Heaven early in the morning allows you to experience authentic neighborhood park culture at its liveliest before larger tour groups arrive. For your afternoon hike at Mutianyu, wear sturdy, slip-resistant walking shoes to navigate the steep, uneven stone steps between the 18th and 20th watchtowers, and ask your guide on-site if you prefer descending from the 6th Watchtower via the thrilling open-air chairlift and toboggan slide instead of the cable car.

Day 4: Spiritual Heritage, Living Hutongs & Modern Skyline — Lama Temple, Imperial College, Hutong Tour & Beijing CBD

Begin your morning after breakfast at the magnificent **Lama Temple (Yonghe Palace)**, the largest and best-preserved Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Beijing. Originally built as a royal residence and the birthplace of both the Yongzheng and Qianlong emperors of the Qing Dynasty, this incense-filled sanctuary houses three world-renowned artistic treasures: a towering 26-meter Maitreya Buddha carved from a single white sandalwood trunk, gilded bronze statues

representing the Buddhas of Past, Present, and Future, and the intricate 500-Arhat Hill.

Just steps away along quiet, scholar-tree-lined lanes, continue to the **Beijing Confucius Temple and Imperial College Museum (Guozijian)**—arranged according to the classical Chinese architectural tradition of placing a temple to the left of an academy—where stone steles and ceremonial halls bring centuries of imperial civil service examinations and ancient educational heritage to life.

Around lunchtime, immerse yourself in the living neighborhood culture of Beijing's historic **Hutongs**, choosing between two distinct district routes—or blending highlights of both with your guide. In **Dongcheng District**, stroll the leafy, boutique-lined lanes of **Wudaoying Hutong**, sample classic Old Beijing ceramic-jar yogurt and handmade dumplings for lunch, visit a local courtyard family to hear firsthand stories of multi-generational Hutong life, ascend the **Drum Tower** for rooftop views and a live drum performance, and enjoy a 30-minute hands-on session in brush calligraphy, Peking Opera mask painting, or paper-cutting.

Alternatively, head to **Xicheng District** to wander **Yandaixiejie (Skewed Tobacco Pouch Street)**, an 800-year-old commercial alley lined with historic pipe shops and preserved *siheyuan* courtyards, where you can choose either a breezy **Shichahai Rickshaw Ride** past Yinding Bridge and lively lakeside cafes or an in-depth cultural walk past former celebrity residences and princely mansions.

On your return drive to the hotel, pause at **Beijing's Central Business District (CBD)** to admire the dramatic contrast between ancient courtyard alleys and China's contemporary architectural skyline, stopping for exterior photographs of the iconic, cantilevered **CCTV Headquarters**—affectionately nicknamed "Big Pants" by locals.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Handpicked Downtown Hotel in Beijing

Expert Cultural & Neighborhood Insights:
Because Dongcheng and Xicheng offer distinctly different neighborhood vibes, let your guide know at breakfast whether you prefer the artisan shops and hands-on craft workshops near the Drum Tower or the lakeside rickshaw scenery around Shichahai so your afternoon pacing feels relaxed. When visiting the Lama Temple, dress respectfully with shoulders and knees covered and avoid taking photographs inside the prayer halls out of courtesy to active worshippers. Stopping by Beijing's CBD in the late afternoon allows you to catch warm golden-hour reflections across the glass facade of the CCTV Headquarters just as the surrounding skyscrapers begin to illuminate for the evening.

Day 5: Departure from Beijing — Morning at Leisure & Private Airport/Station See-off

Enjoy a relaxed final morning after breakfast as your **5-Day China Beijing Hutong Tour** comes to a close. Depending on your departure schedule, take advantage of free time to stroll through the neighborhood at your own pace, browse local shops for last-minute souvenirs such as fragrant jasmine tea or traditional Beijing pastries, or simply unwind over a quiet morning coffee.

At the appointed time, your private English-speaking guide and dedicated driver will meet you in the hotel lobby, assist with check-out and luggage, and escort you smoothly to **Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK)**, **Beijing Daxing International Airport (PKX)**, or your departure railway station for your flight or high-speed train to your next destination. Thank you for choosing **Asia Odyssey Travel**—we wish you a pleasant onward journey and look forward to welcoming you again on your future adventures across China and Asia.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Not included (End of Tour Services)

Expert Departure & Transit Insights:
*Standard hotel check-out in Beijing is at 12:00 PM, though your guide can easily arrange complimentary luggage storage at the concierge desk if you have an evening departure and wish to spend the afternoon exploring. To allow ample time for ring-road traffic and terminal security checks, plan to depart downtown Beijing at least 3.5 to 4 hours ahead of international flights, 2.5 to 3 hours before domestic flights, and 1.5 hours prior to high-speed trains. If you want to pick up authentic, packable gifts before heading to the airport, stop by a nearby branch of **Daoxiangcun** for traditional imperial-style pastries or browse the heritage tea and silk boutiques along Qianmen Street.*

Booking Policy

Cancellation Policy

Cancellation by Customer

- Cancellation received before 60 days: FREE of charge
- Cancellation received from 30 days to 59 days prior arrival date: 20% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 15 days to 29 days prior arrival date: 40% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 7 days to 14 days prior arrival date: 70% of total rate
- Cancellation received less than 7 days prior arrival date or No show: 100% of total rate

Children Policy

The rate for children applicable for one child sharing a twin or double cabin with two adults.

- For infant (<04 years old): Free of Charge
- 04 - 11 years old without bed: 50% adult rate
- 04 - 11 years old with extra bed: 75% adult rate
- Above 11 years old with extra bed: 100% adult rate

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