

The Great Wall Marathon
Marathon – Half Marathon – 8.5K
GWM group 1 – 3 / Beijing – Jixian – Beijing / 17– 22 May, 2017
Itinerary No. 1

For Marathon Runners and their families

This **6-day / 5-night itinerary** is one of the two ways to participate in one of the world's most amazing marathon experiences - **The Great Wall Marathon**. This itinerary is primarily aimed at runners who want to participate in the marathon, but friends and family are welcome to accompany runners. This tour combines seeing the capital city of Beijing with a stay in rural Jixian located in the vicinity of The Great Wall Marathon venue. The town Jixian offers the charm of like in a small town as well as fairly modern and comfortable hotel facilities, and is a wonderful place to explore a different side of China. A fluent English-speaking guide will escort the group throughout the sightseeing tours.

Timetable

Day 1: Wednesday May 17, Beijing

Welcome to China

Welcome to amazing China and the city Beijing, the capital of the People's Republic of China. You arrive in a modern and bustling airport that reflects the energy of contemporary China. **Arrival transfer to hotel is not included in the package price.** After checking in, check the hotel notice board to get your tour guide's name and phone number. Great Wall Marathon information packs will be handed out by your tour guide, call the guide if you can't see him/her. The rest of the day is at your own leisure.

No meals are included on this day.

Day 2: Thursday May 18, Beijing

Great Wall Marathon Inspection & Jixian

A closer look at Beijing will have to wait three more days, as we will be heading for The Great Wall of China. Today your dream of climbing the Great Wall will come true. We will leave Beijing at 06:45 am (breakfast box prepared by the hotel will be handed out by your guide if the hotel can't serve buffet breakfast this early) and head northeast to "our section" of the enormous Great Wall at Huangyaguan. Very few tourists find their way up to this remote place, despite the rich range of possibilities here. All runners must walk the 3.5 km of the wall that is part of the Great Wall Marathon course to familiarize themselves with the route. Non-runners are also welcome to partake in this walk, though good physical condition is required. A sandwich lunch will be served and after lunch we will go straight to our hotel in the small town of Jixian, situated approximately a 45-minutes drive away from Huangyaguan. The town has few sites, but lots of local folklore that a visitor would never get to experience in Beijing. The rest of the afternoon is spent at your own leisure and that night, we will enjoy typical local dishes for dinner.

Please remember to check out of your hotel before leaving Beijing.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included on this day.

Day 3: Friday May 19, Jixian

Relaxation in Rural China with tour option and Dinner with extra noodle/rice

Today is a good day to relax and take in the local atmosphere of rural China. The warm and friendly Chinese in this area are not so used to foreigners, and their curiosity is a tourist attraction in itself. There is an opportunity to participate in the optional tour of Jixian and its most famous monuments.

Optional Tour 1 - Rural China

- **Tour begins from the hotel lobby, exact time follow the instruction of your tour guide.**
- **Price US\$ 88 per person**
- **Optional tours have to be booked before leaving for China.**

Tours includes

- Local Outdoor Market
- The Qing Tombs
- Chinese style lunch

We will start this excursion with a visit to the local outdoor market in Jixian. In China, private entrepreneurship has returned to the local markets after having been illegal for several decades and here you will find most interesting examples of personal initiative. After the local market, we will head toward the Qing Tombs. An impressive graveyard covers an enormous area and houses 5 of China's emperors, 14 empresses and 136 "prime" concubines. Although these graves are more impressive than the famous Ming graves (located closer to Beijing), these Qing graves are visited by very few. We will first visit one of the most splendid one of all royal tombs in Chinese history, Yuling (buried here is Qianlong, the greatest emperor of the Qing dynasty) has the finest tomb chamber, a series of rooms separated by solid marble doors, with its walls and arched ceilings engraved with Buddha figures and more than 30,000 words of Tibetan scripture. The 3-ton doors themselves have reliefs of bodhisattvas (beings on the road to enlightenment) and the four protective kings usually found at temple entrances.

Another tomb we will visit is Ding Dongling, the tomb of Empress Dowager Cixi, the woman who ruled China behind a curtain for 48 years. The main hall contains reproductions of pictures produced in 1903 by Cixi's photo studio within the Summer Palace. Everywhere there are reminders of the Forbidden City, such as the terrace-corner spouts carved as water-loving dragons. The interior has motifs strikingly painted in gold on dark wood, recalling the buildings where she spent her last years. There are walls of carved and gilded brick, and superbly fearsome wooden dragons writhe down the columns.

At night, a dinner with extra noodle/rice will be held for everybody.

Breakfast and dinner are included this day.

Day 4: Saturday May 20, Jixian

The Great Wall Marathon

Today is the big day. We get up early in order to have breakfast, and will leave Jixian at 05:20 am to head for Huangyaguan and 7:30 am start of the 2017 Great Wall Marathon. The reason we start early is to avoid the daytime heat and humidity. Running in the early hours of the morning is much nicer, and will definitely improve your running time. The Great Wall Marathon is an official international marathon timed by the Bib-Chip system. All participants who complete the race within 8 hours receive a medal. However, it should be emphasized once again that the main aim of this challenge is to have fun and finish the race. Times are of minor importance and there are no prizes to be won. Sandwich lunches are provided for everyone. Between 12 am and 4:30 pm, busses will take runners back to Beijing as they fill.

20 minutes massage on site is included after race.

Remember to check out of the hotel in the morning, as we will go to Beijing at the end of this day. Breakfast and lunch are included on this day.

Day 5: Sunday May 21, Beijing

Beijing at leisure with tour options and Celebration Dinner

Today is for runners to sleep in, recover and take it easy. You can shop at Silk Alley, or fill your senses with sights and sounds of Beijing, the street vendors, the crowds, the bicycles or the colorful banners. A day program is not included so Sunday is a good day to explore Beijing and its markets on your own. Don't forget to take a package of matches or a business card from the hotel, so you can show it to a taxi driver to get back in case you get lost. However, for people who prefer more planned activities, there is a choice of participating in two optional tours of Beijing and in this way exploring the most famous attractions in Beijing.

Optional Tour 2 - City of Emperors

Price US\$ 62 per person

- **Tour begins from one of the GWM official hotels at around 8:30 am, hotel name and exact time follow the instruction of your tour guide.**
- **Own transport by e.g. taxi is needed to and from the hotel which the tour starts from**
- **Optional tours have to be booked before leaving for China.**

Tours includes

- The Tian An Men Square
- The Forbidden City
- Temple of Heaven
- Silk Exhibition Hall
- Peking Duck lunch

Tian An Men Square, The Forbidden City, Peking Duck, Temple of Heaven and Silk Exhibition Hall

Beijing served as the capital for 5 dynasties over a period of 800 years. Each emperor was proclaimed to be a dragon sent from heaven. We begin our tour with a stop at Tian An Men Square, the largest public plaza in the world. Located in the heart of modern Beijing, Tiananmen Square was first built during the Ming Dynasty. Covering an area of 44 hectares, the enormous square is the main entrance to the Forbidden City. From there we continue north through The Forbidden City. Over the central arched gateway is the famous portrait of Mao. This magnificent complex with its many palaces and halls is the largest imperial palace ever built in the world, featuring more than 800 buildings with over 9,000 rooms, resplendent golden-glazed roofs, red lacquered pillars and vermilion walls. Most of the morning will be spent exploring the Forbidden City. At lunch you will enjoy an outstanding dish of authentic roasted Beijing Duck. After lunch, sightseeing continues at the beautiful Temple of Heaven in the southern part of Beijing. This was the place where the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties worshipped heaven and prayed for abundant harvests. The complex consists of the 125 feet (38 meter high) Hall of Prayer for Bounteous Harvests, the Imperial Vault of Heaven with a gilded cupola, the three-tier Circular Altar, Echo Wall and the Thrice-Echoing Stone. Occupying an area of 270 hectares makes this the largest temple and altar complex in China. We complete the afternoon with a visit to a silk exhibition hall where you will have the chance to see the reeling of silk from cocoons. There is a large variety of silk products can be purchased here such as silk dresses, blouses, skirts, pajamas, silk floss quilts, beddings, hats etc.

Optional Tour 3 - City of People

Price US\$ 56 per person

- **Tour begins from one of the GWM hotels at around 8:30 am; hotel name and exact time follow the instruction of your tour guide.**
- **Own transport by e.g. taxi is needed to and from the hotel which the tour starts from**
- **Optional tours have to be booked before leaving for China.**

Tours includes

- The Summer Palace
- Pearl Exhibition Hall
- Giant Panda
- Olympic village outside visit
- Lunch

We begin with a visit to the Beijing Zoo where we will see Giant Pandas. The giant panda is universally loved, but this peaceful, bamboo-eating member of the bear family faces many threats. Its population is small and isolated as its traditional forest habitat in southwest China's mountainous areas becomes fragmented. The government has set up more than 30 reserves, but habitat destruction and poaching continues to pose a threat to pandas living outside them. With rapid economic development, it is more important than ever to ensure the giant panda's survival. There are 1596 pandas living in the wild and 234 in the zoos in China. Then drive to the Summer Palace, one of the most extraordinary sights in Beijing. Once tour inside you will be amazed by its gorgeous general view and the exquisite architectural style. Summer Palace was first built several hundred years back in Jin Dynasty but was since renovated in large scale several times. In 1860 it was plundered during the Second Opium War but in 1888 the notorious Empress Dowager Cixi had it rebuilt by using the money that was intended for the Navy and made it a very opulent summer retreat for the royal family. Afterwards, we will visit a pearl exhibition hall just outside the Summer Palace. On the way back we will have a chance to make an outside visit to Bird's Nest and Water Cube, which are famous for Olympic Game 2008.

At 6:30 pm, all participants - runners and non-runners alike - are picked up from the hotel and taken to the banquet prepared to celebrate your triumph run over the Great Wall. Busses will be serving all hotels between 9:30 pm. and 10 pm. For the very fit who do not want to spend this celebratory night in bed, one of Beijing's great nightclubs will be awaiting us with dance music and colorful cocktails until the break of dawn. Dress code for the evening: No shorts or sandals!

Breakfast and dinner are included on this day.

Day 6: Monday May 22, Beijing

Bags packed with sweaty running gear and unforgettable memories, we are ready to return home. Depending on your departure time, you will have the day for shopping or a final visit to one of the many sights of Beijing. You need to check out before 12:00 noon. Departure transfer to airport / railway station is not included in the package price.

Breakfast is included on this day.

Price from US \$1,300 per person

General Price and booking information:

- All prices are per person based on double occupancy (minimum 2 persons traveling together).
- Single accommodation is available upon request for a supplementary fee.
- Price reduction of \$50 per person if booking and deposit are made before December 1st 2016.
- Late entry fee of \$100 per person will be applied for participants who book and register after March 20th, 2017.
- Last possible date to book and register with The Great Wall Marathon 2017 is April 20th 2017.

The price includes:

- 5 nights accommodation, including service charge and taxes
- Meals as written, where breakfast is American buffet style when possible. Meals in Jixian offered according to program
- Sightseeing and excursions as listed (Optional tours must be purchased separately)
- All expenses related to the Great Wall Marathon
- Marathon medical team of specialized physicians and nurses. This service is offered on **race day** only.
- Comprehensive information packet with documents

Price excludes:

- International air tickets, air fees and airport taxes
- Passport fee (every participant must have a passport valid past December 01st 2017)
- Visa for China
- Transfer to hotel and transfer to the airport (can be booked through your national GWM sales agent).
- Optional Tours which must be booked in advance
- Insurance

Please Note:

- It is the responsibility of each participant to have a valid passport and to obtain a valid visa before traveling into China.
- Participation is purely at your own risk. All extra costs incurred, no matter what the cause, will under no circumstances be the responsibility of the Great Wall Marathon Company.
- Concerning medical risks - [all active participants must declare that they are in good health and have their own insurance that covers their stay in China.](#) The Great Wall Marathon brings its own team of specialized physicians and nurses to assure that every injured participant receives suitable treatment.