

GREAT WALL OF CHINA TREK

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How fit do I need to be?

This trekking challenge is all about **endurance** fitness rather than speed, and it is not a race. You will be up early in the mornings and trekking for an average of 6 hours each day, so good fitness and stamina is very important. Try to train with your day-pack on your back and get used to drinking and carrying water during your walks. There is inevitably a lot of trekking up and down steps, so any step exercises will help build up your leg muscles. Take the stairs and not the lift at every opportunity! Sticking to our training plan will really pay off and while any exercise helps, the best form of preparation is walking on hilly terrain for long periods on consecutive days. This trek is achievable for most people provided they **train well in advance**.

Keep in mind that this is designed to be a personal or fundraising **challenge**, and many people will find elements of the trip difficult at times – whether it is the physical trekking, changing weather, the difference in culture or something else. Try to work as a team and help each other out during any difficulties. While there are challenges, the enjoyment and rewards that come from trekking the Great Wall are immense!

What will the trekking be like?

There is very little flat terrain and you will be walking on or beside the Wall at all times; training on uneven terrain and up and downhill will help. You will trek approximately 45km in total – though do not base your training on distances! It will feel far longer. Trekking is partly on flagstones of various conditions on the Wall, and partly on paths through woodland and farmland. At times it is rough and rocky underfoot, and some sections are very steep. It can be a little slippery after rain. There are also many long sections of steps. There are some paths with **high drops**; they are not particularly narrow, but for those who suffer from vertigo, these sections do present **extra challenges**. If you are unsteady on your feet or need to give your knees some relief you will find trekking poles useful but do make sure you use these when training. Our exact route sometimes changes, as changes are made to the Great Wall and its environs.

Who accompanies us on the trek from Discover Adventure?

Your trip will be led by an **experienced Discover Adventure leader**. Sometimes they accompany you from the UK, but they may meet you in-country. Our leaders are selected for their experience and knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in first-aid so you are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

Will there be a doctor trekking with us too?

An expedition doctor or medic often accompanies the group as well, dependent on group size. Our medics are there to provide first aid and promote day-to-day welfare on the trip; they carry a robust medical kit to cover the most commonly occurring issues. They also provide crucial support to our leaders and, as they are usually found at the back of our groups, are also experts at encouraging you when things get tough.

Who else will accompany the group on this challenge?

Our local support crew is made up of local guides and drivers. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs, the history and ancient culture. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.



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What is the accommodation like?

Whilst on the trek you will be staying in **local hotels and homestays**. Because our trek is not focussed on the touristed parts of the Wall, accommodation is of a basic standard and usually government-run, not privately owned. Rooms have ensuite facilities and are perfectly adequate for a good night's sleep, but please don't expect the same standards you might be used to in the UK or when you go on holiday. Rooms are on a twin-share basis. If you are travelling alone, you will be paired up with someone of the same sex and similar age. You can always let us know nearer the time if you wish to share with a particular person, if you have not already done so.

Can I request single accommodation?

There may be a limited number of single rooms available, however these are subject to request and at an additional cost (on a first-come, first-served basis). Please contact us if this is important to you, but remember sharing a room is a really good ice-breaker if you don't know anyone else on the trip, so don't worry too much about it!

Will there be Wi-Fi, phone reception and charging points?

There is usually Wi-Fi in the hotels, though it may not be as fast as you're used to at home. Do not expect internet access when on the trek itself. The phone reception will be limited. You should be able to charge your devices in most hotels en-route, though nothing is guaranteed! Treat this challenge like a 'Digital Detox' and tell your relatives that no news is good news. The leaders will have a phone for emergency use if required.

For voltage and plug information in hotel accommodation, see <https://www.iec.ch/world-plugs>

What are the transport arrangements for the group and our

You will travel on a coach or minibus, depending on the group size, to the start of your trek. There will also be a few mid-trip transfers; it is not possible to walk continuously on the Wall, and moving to different sections allows us to appreciate its contrasting architecture and scenery.

Your **luggage will be transported each day by the bus as you trek**, so you therefore cannot access your main packs during the day. You will need to carry a day-pack each day, with spare layers, waterproof, sun-cream, hat, camera, snacks and water etc.

You will need to carry your main bag from the bus to your room each night and some accommodation is quite spread out; consider luggage with shoulder straps or wheels. Discover Adventure Kitbags are specially designed for the rigours of our challenges and are very affordable; see your Passenger Portal for details.



What will the weather be like?

Days should be warm and sunny, not too hot or cold, though it can be cooler up in the hills. Rain showers aren't unusual, and it can be windy. The autumn can be cooler than spring. Weather conditions can change quickly, and **you should be prepared for anything**. Average temperatures in Beijing range between 7-27°C. Although the weather is likely to be pleasant, you will need to be prepared for rain and a drop in temperature at night.

Never underestimate the sun, even if it feels cold while you are trekking or there is cloud cover or the wind is blowing. Please bring Factor 30 Sun Screen as a minimum, along with SPF lip salve too. You are trekking through some exposed areas with little shelter so a sun hat and quality sunglasses are also a must.

What will I be eating?

The food on this trip is Chinese in style, as you'd expect! Meals are more traditional than the restaurant-style dishes typical in the UK, though there are similarities. The food is delicious, freshly-cooked and plentiful so it is important that you make sure you are eating well for the long days of trekking. For breakfast you will typically have bread, jam, eggs, tea and coffee, and you'll make up your own packed lunch of sandwiches, cake, fruit and a snack. In the evening you will be served traditional Chinese meals with a variety of meat and vegetable dishes and plenty of rice. It is typical in China to serve yourself from shared dishes on a revolving platter on your table, so it's easy to ensure you have enough to eat.



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I have a specific dietary need; will there be enough for me to eat?

Being vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free or having other dietary requirements is usually not a problem provided you **let us know well in advance** (airlines need to know at least 8 weeks prior to the departure). Please do not expect the variety you would have at home – we will be among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help, and in some regions certain foods are hard to access. If you feel you aren't getting enough energy because of your dietary requirements please talk to the leaders on the trip – they can't help unless they know there's a problem. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we advise you to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Do I need to bring snacks?

Bring enough snacks to keep you going each day – around 2-3 tasty treats a day will suffice. We recommend a combination of slow and fast release snacks such as cereal bars, flapjacks, salted nuts, chocolate bars such as Mars or Snickers, and a packet of sweets. Bringing a combination of treats will keep you interested in snacking as consistent energy levels are important.



What is the celebration meal?

At the end of your challenge, there will be a final meal together as a group to celebrate your achievements. We generally take this at a wonderful Peking Duck restaurant in Beijing and it's always a real treat for our groups.

How much do I need to drink?

Drink, drink, drink! Due to the nature of the challenge, you may find that you will need to drink significantly more than you would trekking in the UK. There will be plenty of water at breakfast for the day ahead, and in the evenings at dinner, so ensure that you keep topping up your bottles and hydration systems from the large water containers provided (we are working hard to minimise use of plastic bottles where possible.) You will be carrying at least 2 litres of water during the day so try to get used to trekking with that amount of water when training so you are used to the weight.

Outside of trekking, you may have to buy bottled water. To cut down on the inevitable single-use plastic this consumes, we strongly recommend you invest in a filtration bottle such as Water-to-Go. This will allow you to drink from (eg) hotel taps and airports without concern. Please follow the link on our [Responsible Tourism](#) web-page for more information; see Kitlist for your discount code. Even with a filtration bottle, there may obviously still be times you need to buy bottled water, but it will cut down on plastic waste, and can be used for many DA trips to come!

What about toilets?

There are no toilet facilities except when in your hotels (aside from the occasional squat-style toilet in some locations) so there may be occasions when you need to go whilst trekking. You will need to take nappy sacks and paper in order to make sure you leave no trace. These can be discarded in the next bin. The toilets in the hotels will have a bin next to them for used toilet paper, rather than flushing it, so please use it to avoid potential blockages. Public toilets in China can be quite interesting; this is a good time to employ a sense of humour to overcome cultural differences!

What can I do to prevent illness during the challenge?

Illness can spread through the group very quickly when you are living closely together, so it's important to adopt good handwashing techniques. Bring **antiseptic hand sanitiser** for use after the toilet and before eating to minimise the spread of germs. Also, avoid sharing water bottles and sharing each other's food or sweets as this spreads germs very easily, even if you are being careful. Do not drink tap water – or clean your teeth in it – and avoid ice cubes in drinks unless you are sure they are made with bottled/treated water. For the same reason avoid salads, raw vegetables and fruit that you cannot peel yourself, as well as unpasteurised dairy products. On the trek itself, food is cooked and prepared to very high standards and you can eat with confidence, but elsewhere, do not eat a meal if you think it has not been freshly cooked.

Like any trip of this nature, there is an increased risk of sunstroke and dehydration. You should use a high factor sun cream, wear a hat and sunglasses, and ensure you drink plenty of water to replenish your fluid levels. The key point for good health is to keep your resistance high – eat and drink well – and to be fully aware of all possible health risks such as poor hygiene, undressed open cuts, untreated water and bites.



Any safety tips for non-trekking time?

China is a relatively safe country, but as a tourist you can be a target for opportunist crime. One of the benefits of group travel is safety – you all look out for each other, and there's no reason to be alone. Sometimes, however, it's easy to lose concentration in a group. Stay focussed in crowded areas such as airports, bus stations, tourist attractions and markets – they can attract pick-pockets and bag-slashers. Wear a concealed money belt with flight ticket, passport and cash inside, and leave your valuables behind; you don't need your best jewellery and gadgets on this trip. Do not leave your drinks unattended or accept drinks from strangers, and be careful at night – avoid walking or getting into taxis alone.

What if I have any issues during the trip?

Our leaders are very experienced and work very hard to ensure your trip runs as smoothly and enjoyably as possible, and we're sure that you'll have a wonderful time. If you do have any concerns or problems during the trip please talk to the crew and give them the opportunity to explain or rectify things while they are able. They are all very approachable!



What will happen in the case of an emergency on this challenge?

The crew will have radios, phones, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. If you are feeling unwell on this trek, tell your leaders and listen to their advice as your health and safety is our top priority.

I suffer from vertigo, will I find this particularly difficult on the trek?

You will find some areas on this trek more challenging than others, and if you suffer particularly badly, your experience of the trip will fall more into the Orange range of trip grading than Yellow. Remember your safety is always our top concern and you will be with experienced leaders and local guides who will ensure that you are well supported. Concentrate on improving your fitness, stamina and experience over rough terrain, to minimise other challenging elements. If you are concerned about vertigo, please do give us a call to discuss.

What currency should I take, and how much money will I need?

You will need to set aside money on the trip for meals which are not included in the itinerary plus drinks and souvenirs, additional activities and local crew tips. There are plenty of shopping opportunities in China, such as the indoor market on your free time in Beijing at the end. You may also wish to check out local shows and attractions that are not part of the organised itinerary.

We usually recommend that you take approximately **£200 worth of spending money** but if you are planning on buying lots of souvenirs or wish to go to shows/attractions outside of the itinerary **you may wish to take more**. There is a chance to change money in your hotel but we recommend that you take Chinese Yuan with you – it is easy to obtain in the UK. Since Covid, China has largely gone cash free and everything is paid for through an App, but for travellers, cash is still a good option. Avoid using notes of higher denominations as you will have difficulty obtaining change. It is always wise to take a credit card in case of emergency as well.

If for reasons due to fitness, illness or any unforeseen circumstances, you have to depart from the group arrangements, you must ensure that you have enough funds to cover any resultant costs – for example, extra hotel accommodation or meals. Some of these may be recoverable through your travel insurance, depending on the cover and circumstances.

What do you recommend for crew tips?

The local crew work incredibly hard for the duration of the trip and it is great if we can show our appreciation in the form of a tip. The guide is **around £40-60 per participant** (which can also be paid in Yuan), depending on group size. This is split out between the local crew and is of course at your discretion. Your trek leader will give you further advice, as the guide can vary depending on the size of the group. Please do not give out individual tips to any local crew who you feel have helped you personally; they work well as a team and those 'out of sight' will be working just as hard.



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How do I ensure I'm sensitive to the local culture?

Remember that what you would wear on a hot day in the UK is not necessarily acceptable in other countries, particularly in rural areas where the local people do not see many foreign tourists. Women are advised to avoid tight or strappy tops in favour of regular T-shirts; men should wear a top at all times. By dressing thoughtfully, you not only experience minimum hassle but do not offend the local people; many of our trips rely on these small communities.

Try to research a little about the culture before you go, or learn a few basic phrases in Mandarin; it all goes a long way to ensuring you connect with local people in a positive way. Thanks in advance for helping to maintain the good reputation of Discover Adventure groups.

Do I need travel insurance?

As part of your booking conditions, it is **compulsory that you ensure you have adequate travel insurance cover** to cover you for trekking. See the [insurance page on our website](#) for further information.

When will we know the flight details and meeting point?

Discover Adventure will usually confirm the main group flight details 6 weeks prior to the trip departure so you will know which airport you are travelling from and can arrange suitable transport. You will receive your **Final Joining Instructions** in the month prior to the trip departure, within which specific details of where and when to meet your trip leader and fellow trekking participants will be confirmed.



Can I make my own flight arrangements or alter my flight from the main group?

Flights are included on this trip and you will automatically be booked on to the main group flights, unless you let us know otherwise in good time (no later than three months prior to the trip departure). It is possible to make your own flight arrangements; a land-only discount will be applied. See the **Flight Arrangements Form** in your Passenger Portal.

It is also possible to extend your stay and deviate from the main group flight booking (fee applies); again, see the form. Note that you will remain on the same flight path, returning from the same airport. There is sometimes a supplement to pay if the flights are more expensive on your requested day; early requests have the best chance of avoiding this. We will always contact you if this is the case to check whether you are happy to proceed. If you are keen to upgrade your flight, this may be possible at a supplement and you can contact us for an approximate price but please note that this is often very expensive and we will require full payment upfront.

Will I need my flight ticket before the trip departure date?

You need to have a copy of your flight ticket in order to apply for your entry visa, so this will be sent to you at the appropriate time to allow you to do this. You need to print this out as part of your visa application and it's worth taking a hard copy with you for the duration of your trip.

What is the luggage allowance?

Your main luggage limit on the plane is generally 20kg with a 5kg allowance for hand luggage. Do travel lightly and take only small bottles of toiletries. Do not pack your lithium batteries or power packs in your hold luggage, it is best to keep these in hand luggage. If you stick to the kit list you will manage this with no problems.

What do I need to bring?

Refer to your Kit List to ensure that you have everything you'll need for this trip. It includes lots of nuggets of information to help you prepare, so read it through well in advance. Don't leave it too late to buy items - we recommend taking kit that you've thoroughly tested beforehand. Our Kit List factors in the range of weather conditions you may encounter; you may not end up using everything, but being prepared is vital. Despite that, try to travel as lightly as possible; for example, cut down by taking small bottles of toiletries and half a pack of wet wipes. Having spare layers is important, in case clothing gets wet, but having fresh clothes every day is an unnecessary luxury. Do a practice pack in advance, and weigh your bags to make sure you haven't over-packed.



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What if this trip does not meet minimum numbers?

Every group needs a minimum number of bookings for it to be feasible to run. Cancelling a trip is rare, and we do our utmost to avoid it. You will be contacted in plenty of time if we are concerned about the group size, and we will discuss options with you.

What are the passport and visa requirements?

A valid 10-year passport is essential; with at least six months remaining after you arrive, and 2 blank pages.

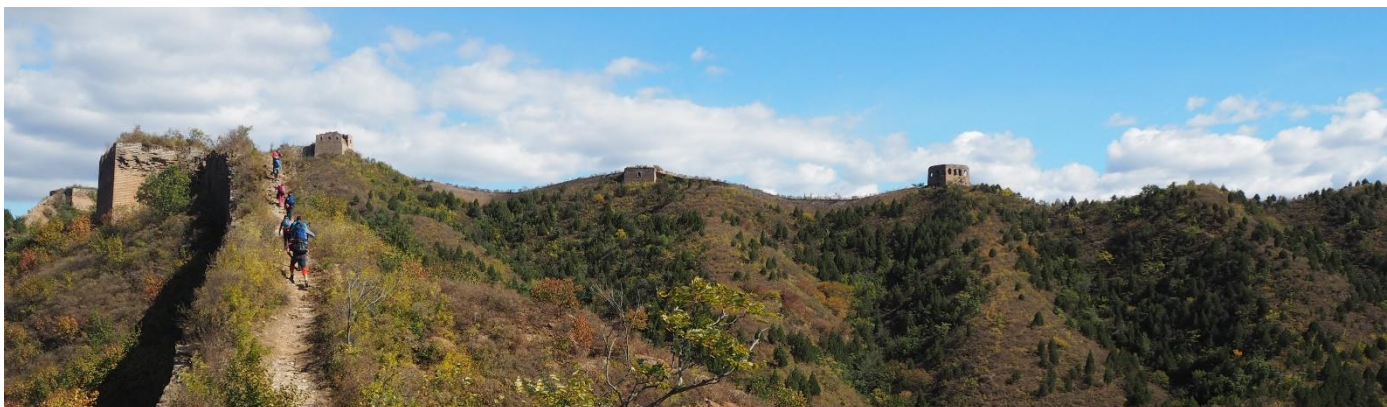
As of February 2026, a visa is no longer required to enter China for stays of up to 30 days. Visa-free entry is currently confirmed until the end of 2026; we will update our customers if this is not renewed in 2027. British citizens should refer to the foreign travel advice [given here](#) for more information.

All other nationalities are responsible for checking with their embassies or consulates for the latest information. Please do check if you require a visa if you are not a British national. Remember to check any regulations for countries you may transit during your flight too.

There may also be health declarations to make. Do check the [FCO Entry Requirements](#) information carefully, as regulations can and do change without warning.

How can I find out more about the requirement for vaccinations?

You will need to ensure that your routine UK schedule of vaccinations is up-to-date (especially Tetanus) and check the [NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro](#) website for further guidance and information. Always consult your local GP or travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements.



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