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2017/09-10



## EXPLORING BEIJING

URBAN EXPLORATION, ALT-ACTIVITIES,  
AND CITY CENTER HIKES

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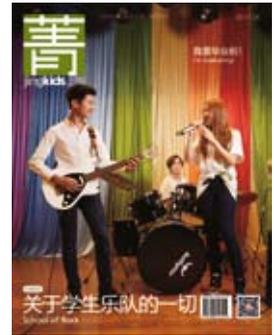
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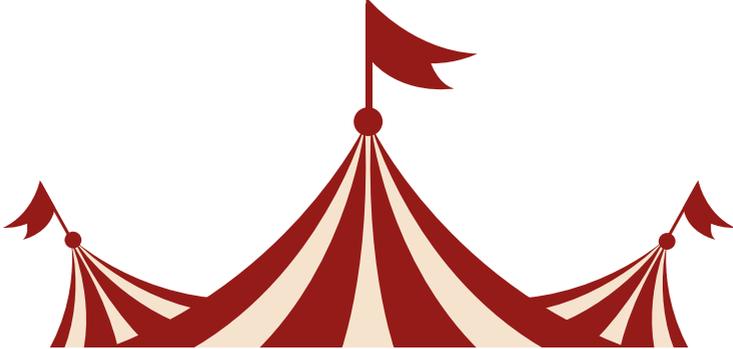
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Helping the international community get the most out of life in Beijing

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BEIJING'S  
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**DAILY UPDATES,  
EVENTS, AND  
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THEBEIJINGER.  
COM**

Cover photograph taken by Dave's Studio. Special thanks to our models Brin C. of Burbex, Tori Larsen of Beijing Hikers, and Ankit Nayal of BActive. VR headset provided by Yue Cheng Technology.



The most important dates this month

# WHAT'S HAPPENING



## SEP 16-17

### The Beijinger 2017 Pizza Fest

Grab a slice. Stuff your face. Repeat. That's the not-so-secret recipe to satisfaction at this year's Pizza Fest. Located at Wangjing Soho (11am-8pm both days), the event will feature at least 50 food, drink, and other vendors, along with performances from The Hunters, The Mac Daddies, and a sprinkling of DJs.

## SEP 16-24

### China Women's Film Festival

The fifth edition of this socially conscious festival will feature screenings of short films, documentaries, and recent Hollywood hits with a focus on female directors, stars, and feminist themes. There'll also be Q&As and forums related to women's rights with participation from numerous Chinese and foreign filmmakers.



## OCT 3-7

### Maybe Mars' 10th Anniversary Showcase

Yugong Yishan, School Bar, and Yue Space host gigs to celebrate a decade of top-shelf indie rock releases from one of the capital's most beloved labels. Be prepared to pogo and mosh to Maybe Mars' eclectic roster, including P.K. 14, Chui Wan, and Carsick Cars.

## OCT 21

### Sino 10s Rugby Tournament

Organized by the Beijing Aardvarks Rugby Football Club, the fourth Sino 10s Rugby Tournament sees expat teams from across China descend upon Dulwich College in the Northern Capital for a family friendly day of sport, food, and (of course) a few cheeky beers along the way.



Visit [theBeijinger.com](http://theBeijinger.com) for even more events and details.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Exploration. The first few months of living in Beijing are often filled with enough exploration and nail-biting thrills to last a lifetime. But what happens when you've exhausted the bars, the restaurants, the fast and furious fling with solvents dressed as alcohol? The simple answer? More than you could possibly imagine!

As the leaves change color and temperatures reach something akin to hospitable, autumn is literally Beijing's annual golden interlude, which is why we've dedicated this entire issue to getting out and making the most of this lush, if entirely too short-lived, season.

Within these glossy pages, I pick the brain of the city's primo urban explorer to guide us laymen in discovering the capital's forgotten and decaying sights, Jeremiah Jenne maps out three of the best historical city center treks, Kyle Mullin compiles five of the best alternative activities around town, and Robynne Tindall speaks to the Beijing Hikers about the less tourist-clogged portions of the Great Wall.

Further afield, Robynne Tindall provides tips on traveling and eating in Taipei and Tautvile Daugelaite helps with navigating China's south via train. Stuck in town with the kids? Jeremiah Jenne discusses how to make the most of the Forbidden City and its unending dragons with the rugrats in tow.

Of course, you'll also find reviews of Beijing's brand-spanking-new gustatory delights, including Bottega Nali Patio, Cannon's, and Home Thai for eats, as well as One Third, and Forty+ Taphouse for drinks. We'll also delve into what to serve at a Mid-Autumn Festival dinner if you don't feel like heading out.

Whatever your adventure, Beijing has it all, so take our disembodied hand and stare at our sand-brushed buttocks as we lead you through the best on offer.

Tom Arnstein  
Managing Editor



PHOTO: DAVE'S STUDIO

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# CITY SCENE

STAT // BEST OF THE BLOG // SCENE & HEARD



RMB 550  
BILLION

The amount of money forecasted to be spent during the second of China's annual Golden Weeks, the National Day holiday (Oct 1-8). National Day is a big deal for domestic tourism; workers relax, families unite, and if you hadn't noticed, city life outside of the usual don't-visit-unless-you-enjoy-trawling-the-seventh-circle-of-hell tourist attractions comes to a screeching halt.

The first-ever such holiday was implemented on October 1, 1999 by the government as a means to boost the economy. Things have come a long way since the measly 28 million trailblazers set out on vacay 18 years ago, a figure that last year reached a height of 593 million travelers.

But the joys of domestic spending were not always so assured, with some delegates complaining that week-long holidays, especially among the country's trade, government, and tax agencies, was actually hurting the economy. The naysayers were soon silenced though after the people's spending power proved too far gone and eclipsed any further need for concern.

Sadly, if you haven't booked your trip out of Beijing by now, you're likely to be marooned in the least of exotic locales: your couch, confined to eating at a seriously reduced number of locally run and Western restaurants. Our advice? Don't waste this golden opportunity; start looking at Chinese New Year destinations now.

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## 1. Demolitions Hit Gulou Xidajie as Long-Term Expats Consider Bailing on Beijing

The summer break came to a sudden halt when construction crews and a bulldozer set to work demolishing swaths of Gulou Xidajie. The renewed vigor of the authorities on the northwest side of town brought an end to the short respite in razing which had become the norm during the first half of 2017, leaving onlookers to wonder once again just how far the revamps will reach.

The new spate of destruction has also left long-term expats, especially those who have lost businesses to the Brickening, disillusioned, the affects of which may see some foreigners leaving Beijing sooner than planned.

## 2. Rapper Xie Di Wants to Shoot Foreigners in His New Song, "Wack Laowai"

China's expat community again became the target of anger for China's rap artists, as illustrated by Sichuan's Xie Di desire to shoot foreigners with a gun in his new single "Wack Laowai" (瓜老外 *gua laowai*).

In the video for the track, Xie unleashes his anger toward the foreign community and features a number of lyrics that show Xie's frustration toward expats, who are repeatedly called "laowai." Xie uses the song to impose his dominance by saying he wants to "fire a gun at you" and goes as far as to blame expats for the sins committed by their ancestors, explaining that "Every man passes on his genes."



## 3. Ten Words and Phrases That Have a Different Meaning in Beijing

Our city is one of a kind. You know how we know that? Because when we go home and try to explain things to people, they just don't quite get it. That's because the phrases or words we use often mean completely different things elsewhere in the world, creating a rift in the space-time continuum that doesn't quite allow for Beijing life to be pinned down. Check out these 10 words and phrases that mean something entirely different back home.



## 4. TRB Copper to Host Benefit for Cancer-Stricken China Daily Reporter Mike Peters

Beijing's expat community lost one of the city's most talented lifestyle reporters and a fixture in the local food and beverage scene, *China Daily's* Mike Peters, after he was diagnosed with, and later succumbed to, terminal cancer. To help raise funds for his hospice care and repatriation, a number of Beijing's scenesters and business owners came together at TRB Copper to celebrate his life and share anecdotes about one of the Beijing's most beloved expats, a man with a "huge heart, filled with generosity and empathy."

For these stories and more, check out [theBeijinger.com/blog](http://theBeijinger.com/blog)



### 5. Kokomo's Rooftop Demolished

The second big demolition loss of late was news that Kokomo's rooftop terrace was first closed and then knocked down with a massive crane. The bar, renowned as the epicenter for sloppy nights on Sanlitun's "Dirty Bar Street," has been able to live by taking over the space below, what was formerly Rec Room, and revamping it as an extension of Kokomo complete with a surf-style beach bar, cheap drinks, and tunes that'll appeal to the usual masses that turn up already half-conscious any day of the week.

### 6. "Beijing Subway Cosplay Slut Shaming" Revealed as Online Marketing Campaign

Sigh. We're not even entitled to our own outrage. A video showing a middle-aged woman calling a young woman "lascivious" for wearing cosplay on the Beijing Metro attracted millions of views, sparking online debate about public civility. But as it turns out, the *dama* in the video wasn't the only one quick to judge; the video was revealed to have all been part of an elaborate online marketing campaign.



### 7. Fatal Knife Attack at Papa John's Restaurant Franchise in Beijing

A Papa John's franchise restaurant was the site of a fatal knife attack that appeared to be a case of workplace violence. It is alleged that a dispute between a Papa John's worker and a manager escalated into a knife attack with eyewitnesses stating that the manager suffered multiple stab wounds to the chest and abdomen. Police say the victim showed no signs of life by the time the ambulance arrived on the scene.



### 8. Beijing Commuters Rescue Trapped Man by Pushing Subway Train Off Him

In a shining display of solidarity, over a hundred Beijingers were able to rescue a man caught in the gap between a subway and the platform at Dongzhimen Station by physically pushing a carriage off him.

Dozens of people coordinated their efforts to widen the gap between the train and the platform before successfully freeing the victim. Sadly, those efforts were in vain as the man later succumbed to his injuries.

## SCENE & HEARD

**Jing-A Watermelon Wheat Launch**  
Jul 1, Jing-A. Photos courtesy of Jing-A



**Mike Peters Remembrance Benefit**  
Aug 20, TRB Copper. Photos courtesy of Aaron Berkovich of Peking Productions





**The Hutong 10th Anniversary**  
Aug 26, The Hutong. Photos courtesy of The Hutong



**Dinner for Diversity**  
Aug 29, Avocado Tree. Photos by Uni You



# BEIJING'S FIVE BEST ALT-ACTIVITIES

## HAVE FUN THIS FALL WITH SOME OF THE CITY'S MORE OFFBEAT PASTIMES

By Kyle Mullin

If you have an adventurous spirit or just an abundance of curiosity, then you're in luck. That's because there are plenty of offbeat pastimes in the capital to get your adrenaline pumping, allow you to geek out, or to help you simply revel in the weird and wacky. Below, we've rounded up five of our favorite activities that should cater to any and all of your escapism inklings.

### Virtual Reality Flicks at Gome VR Cinema

Unlike the other options on this list, Gome will thrill your eyes while letting your body take it easy. With numerous top-of-the-line VR headsets on hand, as well as a plethora of the newest VR content (updated weekly), Gome is a foreigner-friendly venue that boasts some of Beijing's most complete VR packages and makes for a great way to experience this cutting-edge, next-generation entertainment.

*RMB 30 per hourly use of a headset, RMB 50 for three hours, and RMB 90 for three-plus hours. Daily, 10am-9pm. 25 North Middle Third Ring Road, Dazhong Electric Madianqiao Store, Chaoyang District (6597 3639)*

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### Wakeboarding at Beijing Wake Park

Surprising as it may be – considering Beijing's reputation as a sprawling, traffic-clogged metropolis – there is a wave-laden escape in Shunyi. Those of us seeking an adrenaline fix can hop on a board, hold on (tight) to a rope, and let a speedy boat zip across the water as we attempt to stay standing all the while.

*RMB 1,200 per hour. Mon-Fri, 10.30am-6.30pm; Sat-Sun, 11am-7pm. 19 Baima Lu, Shunyi Olympic Water Park, Shunyi District (6940 2662)*

北京市顺义区白马路19号顺义奥林匹克水上公园

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE VENUES AND ORGANIZERS

### Indoor Surfing at Wavor House

If you're looking to hang ten and ride some waves in a more relaxed, beginner-friendly setting, then this indoor wave pool is a suitably fun plan B. All you need is a bathing suit and a half-decent sense of balance (or if not, a good sense of humor when you fall into these indoor waters), and the facility will provide you with the rest.

*RMB 320 for 2.5 hours. Daily 10am-10pm. Warehouse A, Yihaoku Art Park, Chaoyang District (6433 1631)*

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### Indoor Skydiving at Happy Flying Home

Another safe alternative to an intimidating (albeit fun-looking) prospect, the wind tunnel at this facility allows you to get a taste of skydiving. The company was founded in Zhongshan and has a few branches across China, including this Shunyi location.

*RMB 240 per session (approximately two minutes of airtime). Bldg 12, South Sector, Zhongliang Xiangyung Xiaozhen (138 1010 4809) www.happyfxj.com*

飞行家太空体验馆：顺义区中粮祥云小镇南区12号楼



### Rustic biking with Serk Cycling and Beijing Peloton

Lastly, we have an activity that's far more conventional than the rest of this roundup, but every bit as fun. Yes, these Beijing cycling clubs have much to offer and have the added bonus of a great workout amid the city's gorgeous rural sceneries. We recommend:

- Serk Cycling's weekly Saturday ride. Participants meet at Serk Space on 3 Dongbinhe Lu (near Andingmen subway station) to venture out to the mountains towards Huairou, Mentougou, Miyun Lake etc. with an average of 30-50 cyclists partaking each week. A one-ride pass is RMB 350, a 10-ride pass is RMB 2,500, and a 15-ride pass is RMB 3,000.
- Beijing Peloton's Saturday morning ride. Participants meet near the Trek store at Chaoyang Park South Gate at 7am and head to a range of sights and areas, including Baiyanggou, the Ming Tombs, Huairou, Sihai, Miyun, Pinggu, and other outlying scenic locales. RMB 250 per ride to cover bus and van hire (more info at [www.beijingpeloton.cc](http://www.beijingpeloton.cc)).



# URBEX IN BEIJING

## EXPLORING THE CITY'S DECAYING SIGHTS

By Tom Arnstein

Upon reaching the top of the deserted stadium that once housed the 2008 Beijing Olympic volleyball competitions (and the location of this issue's cover shoot), the metal still ringing out from under our feet like an empty oil drum, I spot a security guard passing his time with a languid cigarette from within the metal box he calls home. Expressing my concern that our adventure may come to a shabby finish, my guide and urban explorer enthusiast (urbexer, if you do so wish) Brin "Burbex" C. simply states, "No one ever looks up, and why would they when the sky is so shitty?" Burbex didn't lie; we returned to ground safely, undisturbed, and slipped into dusk.

The British-born Burbex has been delving into China's forgotten, derelict, and dilapidated ruins for the past five years and, for someone who espouses the joys of hunting down new and unexplored environments, it's surprising to hear how many of the venues he discovered via people who came to him, whether from a sotted Scot seeking a drinking buddy and a chat or an American MIT professor in search of an adventure. It appears that the thrill that comes from discovering something once lost is universal, and the rapid growth and turnover of real estate make Beijing an urban explorer's paradise – but there is finesse to making the most of the city's nooks and crannies.

To follow in Burbex's footsteps, he suggests, "Always keep your eyes open. I often explore at night because you can see where isn't lit up, which is generally a good indication that a building is disused. Also look for broken windows and places that look a little bit shabby." He

continues, "Anytime you see a blue metal fence go up, there's always something on the other side; it's either under construction or slated for demolition. From there I will sometimes get a feel for it via Google Maps and walk around the perimeter to try and spot a way in. Once in, find an easy way out, because you never know who you may run into and getting out is usually easier than getting in. Also keep an eye out for security cameras, but most of them either won't be working or nobody's watching them."

Perhaps most surprisingly, Burbex describes how "security guards rarely seem to care once you're in a place as it's almost more effort to get you out. Quite often they'll point you towards the exit as if to say 'head out that way once you're done.'" This lax outlook is unlikely to last forever as the authorities wise up to the growing urbex community, but for now it provides the perfect excuse to get out and explore the dark and decaying underbelly of an increasingly shiny Beijing. Below you'll find just four of an ever-growing collection of the city's hidden, spooky, and fascinating sites, courtesy of Burbex.

**Things you'll need:** Worker's gloves, long pants, hardy shoes, a torch, bolt cutters, and a pollution mask to protect from dust.

**Safety:** First and foremost, be sensible and know your limits. Never explore anywhere that could be considered reasonably dangerous. Carry a first aid kit, charge your phone, and tell someone where you're going in case you haven't been heard from.

### **Name:** Shougang Capital Steel Plant

**Location:** Shijingshan Lu (closest subway: Gucheng, Line 1)

**Difficulty:** 3/5

**Best for:** Repeat visits, getting lost

**Description:** At 700 hectares, Capital Steel is by far the largest, and likely most famous location on this list. Housing the remains of Shougang Group's old steel plant, which shut down its last furnace in 2010, its sheer size means that you can return to this pig-iron wasteland and always find something new to explore. Highlights include an antique train graveyard, a cavernous blast furnace, and abandoned laboratories. However, the site is slowly being transformed into a "cultural and creative industry center," and was most notably billed to host the ultimately cancelled Intro Festival 2014. It's now bookmarked to become a hub for the 2022 Winter Olympics so it's recommended you go sooner rather than later, just beware of the (caged) guard dogs.



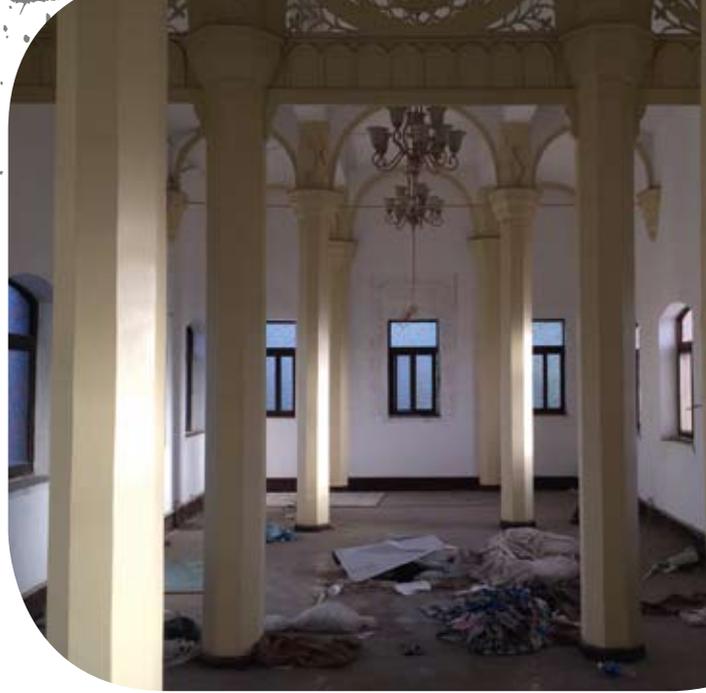
**Name: PLA Hospital**

**Location:** Baiwangshan (closest subway: Anheqiao Bei, Line 4)

**Difficulty:** 2/5

**Best for:** Ghost hunting, DIY gardeners, forest views

**Description:** Surrounded by forest, this abandoned castle-like building is a treat for history buffs, piecing together its past life through the remnants of hastily left-behind items strewn throughout. In the rooms you'll find such chilling objects as rubber guns (whose intended use is a mystery), stray vials of medication, and other rehabilitation equipment that once aided the traumatized and injured. Pushing deeper, long corridors give way to an ornamental chamber complete with lavish columns, and as of late has begun to house local prowlers intent on transforming every viable outdoor space into a garden. What's perhaps most exciting, however, are the lush rooms in the back, mysteriously decked out in four-poster beds, walls spotted with white spaces where widescreen TVs once hung, jacuzzis, and – perhaps most surprisingly – industrial-sized air purifiers. Make your way up to the top for beautiful views of the surrounding forest, and on a clear day, even a glimpse of the Beijing skyline.



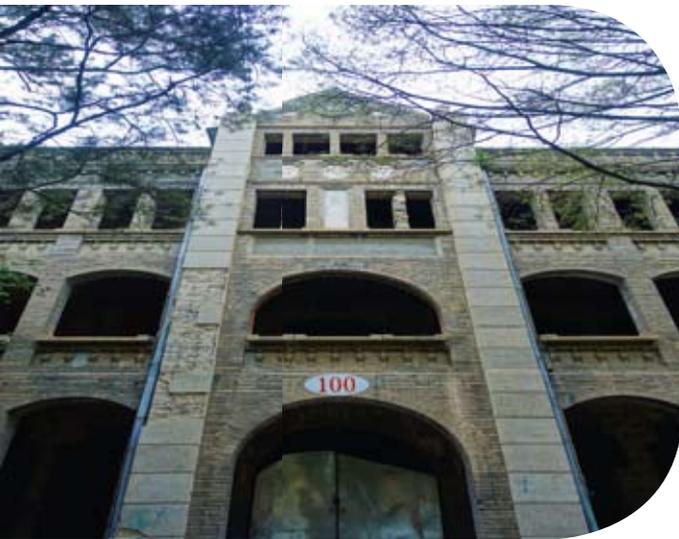
**Name: Catholic School**

**Location:** Baiwangshan (closest subway: Anheqiao Bei, Line 4)

**Difficulty:** 2/5

**Best for:** Fashion shoots, zombie movies

**Description:** Located a stone's throw from the PLA Hospital, this school sits on an adjacent hill and was built in 1919. Although protected as a church, it supposedly never truly functioned as one, but instead became storage for the PLA Hospital, making it the most gruesome entry on this list. For the bravest among you, there's a hole that leads to a tunnel underneath the building with refrigeration rooms jutting off. In one of the rooms, explorers will happen upon specimen jars full of human remains – brains, hearts, intestines – each pickled and neatly labeled. Clear your head above ground by walking the school's long, open attics, a mesmerizing feature that makes it a hotspot for the occasional young, dorky photographer and their aspiring model.



**Name: Longtan Amusement Park Ferris Wheel**

**Location:** Longtan (closest subway: Tiantandongmen, Line 5; Panjiayuan, Line 10)

**Difficulty:** 4/5

**Best for:** Kitschy photos, haunted houses

**Description:** Originally opened in 1987, Longtan Amusement Park was once one of Beijing's premiere family attractions and many young locals are still able to recall fond memories of exploring it in more prosperous times. Now, its aquarium, haunted house, food huts, and this Ferris wheel – which still sits majestically on an island surrounded by a dry moat – all sit dormant, slowly rusting into the ground. Feel daring? Jump into one of the wheel's cabins and let the wind take you up and away, making one full rotation in around 25 minutes. If you get stuck, however, don't expect an influx of visitors to come help anytime soon.

*Discover many more of Beijing's forgotten landmarks over at Burbex's blog, [www.burbex.org](http://www.burbex.org)*



# URBAN HIKING

## HISTORICAL RAMBLES THROUGH BEIJING'S CONCRETE JUNGLE

By Jeremiah Jenne

Beijing is not known for being especially pedestrian-friendly, but that doesn't mean there is a shortage of historical strolls on which to stretch your legs and broaden your knowledge of our fair city. These three long urban hikes will get you off your Mobike and out of your Didi to take a fresh look Beijing from ground level.



### THE CENTRAL AXIS

The Central Axis hike is another ramble that tracks a famous feature of Beijing's urban landscape – an invisible line from the Yongding Gate through the heart of the city to the Drum and Bell Tower. The walk itself is about 9km in total (about four hours) as a straight shot, but the beauty of this walk is the number of famous sites passed along the way. Starting from Yongding Gate, first-half highlights include ❶ the western gate of the Temple of Heaven, ❷ the Qianmen Pedestrian Mall, and ❸ Tiananmen Square. Ambitious walkers can continue into the belly of the beast by buying a ticket and following the axis through the heart of ❹ the Forbidden City and out the back door. The trail continues over ❺ Jingshan and then up ❻ Di'anmen Outer Street to the Drum Tower. Uber-ambitious walkers can continue another 6.5km north from ❼ the Drum Tower to where the Central Axis forms the heart of the 2008 Olympic Green.

Unfortunately, some detours will be necessary. It's not possible at the moment to enter Tiananmen Square from the Qianmen Gate. Walkers will need to travel east or west of the square through a checkpoint and enter the square from the side. Once inside the square, continue via the underpass to the Forbidden City or skip it by following the moat around the outer walls of the Palace before heading to Jingshan Park. Jingshan will require yet one more detour, as the north gate is not currently accessible. Once you've ascended the hill and stood at the geographic center of the city, exit through either the east or west gate of the park and then head north along the outer walls to Di'anmen Inner Street. Follow Di'anmen Inner Street north to the Drum Tower.



## THE IMPERIAL CITY LOOP

Less well known than the massive fortified walls which once enclosed old Beijing, or the mysterious red ramparts which surround the Forbidden City, the Imperial City Wall demarcated an area in the center of the capital and included the palace, its environs, and several former imperial gardens and temples. The Imperial City wall came down in the early 20th century, not long after the end of the Qing Dynasty, and so is sometimes forgotten in discussions of Beijing battlements and barricades. This is also a loop hike, so walkers can start from any point, although two suggestions are Tiananmen West (Line 1 Metro) or Nanluogu Xiang (Line 6/Line 8).

Starting from ❶ Tiananmen West, head north along Nanchang Jie (the road between the Forbidden City and Zhongnanhai). Zhongnanhai was once one of the imperial gardens but in the 20th century became the exclusive realm of the country's leaders and their families. Follow Nanchangjie to ❷ the west gate of Zhongshan Park and enjoy a leisurely stroll before exiting via ❸ the east gate. Cross in front of the Forbidden City to the west gate of the former Ancestral Temple for the emperors (now known by the charming moniker "Workers' Cultural Palace"), out the east gate, and north along Nanchizi and Beichizi until you get to ❹ the northeast corner of the Forbidden City and the southeast corner of ❺ Jingshan Park.

Enter Jingshan Park, climb the hill (it takes only five minutes, and on a clear day, it's more than worth it), and exit the park through ❻ the west gate. From here, head due west and enter the east gate of Beihai Park and walk along the eastern shore to ❼ the north gate. Exit through the north gate and then head east along Dianmen as it cuts between Beihai and the Shichahai lakes (Qianhai and Houhai). Continue past ❽ the south entrance of Nanluogu Xiang and its adjoining Metro station and then head south along Beiheyuan and Nanheyuan. The park in the middle of this street is the location of the eastern section of ❾ the old Imperial City Wall. You can follow this park all the way south until it reaches Chang'an Boulevard, at which point head west on Chang'an Boulevard to take you back to Tiananmen Square, ending your walk at ❿ the Tiananmen East Metro.



## THE SECOND RING ROAD SORTA-CIRCUMAMBULATION

Credit for this one goes to longtime Beijing resident Brian Eyler, who used to lead his students on an annual circumambulation of the Second Ring Road. The whole circuit takes about nine to 10 hours with a stop for lunch somewhere along the way. Directions are simple: pick a stop anywhere along the Line 2 Metro and just follow the Second Ring Road. (Those instructions sound better if you suck down a balloon of helium and say them in a scary munchkin voice.)

This walk is more of a "sorta-circumambulation" as the best route swaps out the actual Southern Second Ring for one of two possible detours. The first is to ❶ travel down Chang'an Boulevard, Beijing's main thoroughfare that features the monumental – some would say brutalist – state architecture and passes just to the north of Tiananmen Square. Note this route will require trudging through the security checks in front of Tiananmen and lines can be long during peak periods. The best time to take the Chang'an route is in the evening (after sunset). The other option is to ❷ walk along the former Ming Dynasty Wall Park and Qianmen Avenue, tracking the southern extent of the wall separating Old Peking's "Tartar" (Inner) and "Chinese" (Outer) cities.



# HITTING THE WALL

## HIKES TO TRY ONCE YOU'VE EXHAUSTED MUTIANYU AND BADALING

By Robynne Tindall

While most of us who live in Beijing are aware that we are extremely lucky to have such close access to a landmark like the Great Wall, there's no doubt that the shine starts to dull once you've visited the busy tourist sections for the nth time. The best way to refresh your passion for the wall is to get off the beaten path and visit one of the so-called "wild," unrestored sections. We consulted Beijing Hikers' Hayden Opie to find out what he considers to be the best Great Wall hikes, whether you are looking to get some strenuous exercise or simply see the Great Wall from a different perspective.

### FOR AN EASIER HIKE: GUBEIKOU

The Gubeikou Great Wall, located around 130km northeast of Beijing, is divided into two parts: Wohushan and Panlongshan, the two being separated by the Chaohe River. The Panlongshan section is a good choice for an easy walk, as it's in good condition, and there are relatively few steep ups and downs compared to other parts of the Great Wall. The wall here runs along the top of a ridge, and you'll enjoy expansive views as you hike. Gubeikou Village has plenty of small shops and restaurants in which to fuel up before and after your hike. To continue your exercise-plus-history experience, check out the three temples in the village just behind the repaired North Gate.

**Duration:** 6-7km, 3-4 hours

**Difficulty:** Easy

### SEE A DIFFERENT SIDE OF THE WALL: ZHUANGDAOKOU TO SHUICHANGCHENG

Shuichangcheng – which literally translates to "Water Great Wall" – makes for a nice change from other sections thanks to its slow dip towards a reservoir below. Some parts of the wall in this area are restored, although none to the degree of Mutianyu or Badaling. Begin in the small village of Zhuangdaokou and climb up onto the wall, whereupon you head left and begin your hike. Note that the last, descending section of the wall is crumbling to the point of impassibility, so once you reach this section, look for a path that heads off to the left and follows alongside the wall instead. You start this hike from either end, beginning in Zhuangdaokou or in Shuichangcheng.

**Duration:** Around 7km, 3-4 hours

**Difficulty:** Moderate (some steep sections)

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BEIJING HIKERS



– or use Airbnb to book one of the renovated courtyard houses – and spend the weekend exploring.

**Duration:** Find your way up to the wall on the west side of Jiankou for a 6km, 3-4 hour hike

**Difficulty:** Moderate

### **FOR A CHALLENGING DAY OUT: THE HIGH TOWER**

In the mountains west of the Badaling Great Wall is a large tower that sits atop a windswept meadow. At 1,440m above sea level, the tower is one of the highest points on the Great Wall in Beijing, and its prominence gives superb views on a clear day. There are two main paths up to the tower: from Huangtaizi Village on the north side of the mountains, and from Changyucheng Village on the south side. The trail from Changyucheng Village is easier to follow and well-maintained, and you're not quite as likely to run into one of the wild pigs that roam about on the north side of the mountains. Note that this route is aimed at hikers rather than those who specifically want to visit the Great Wall – the only wall you'll walk is the short stretch just by the tower, although you'll get fantastic views of it stretching off over the horizon from the top of the tower.

**Duration:** 13km, 5-6 hours

**Difficulty:** Tough, there is a 600m ascent on the way up to the High Tower (note that there is also not a lot of shade on this hike)

### **THE BEST PLACE TO SEE AUTUMN LEAVES: JIANKOU**

One of the best reasons to get out into the countryside surrounding Beijing in late September-early October is to see all the fantastic colors as the leaves change. The Jiankou Great Wall is a great spot to usher in autumn, and is where the inner and outer lines of Beijing's Great Wall join, wrapping around the ridge lines that surround Xizhazi Village. There are numerous options for varying wall hikes here and many of the trails that lead up to the wall pass through forests of deciduous trees, making for a colorful climb. Stay at one of the hostels in the village

*While you can hike the wild Great Wall by yourself, we recommend tackling the more challenging sections with a professional hiking or travel company. Popular local organization Beijing Hikers runs regular hikes to all the above destinations. Visit [www.beijingshikers.com](http://www.beijingshikers.com) for more information and to view their schedule.*



Sip, nibble, gulp, chew, guzzle, savor, feast

# FOOD & DRINK

MID-AUTUMN DISHES // HOME THAI // BOTTEGA NALI PATIO // CANNON'S // ONE THIRD



## **ALL-NEW ITALIAN DINING AT PANGU HOTEL**

*Pangu Seven-Star Hotel (the one that looks like a massive Olympic torch), has recently undergone managerial transformation. What that means for us? Their 21st-floor Western restaurant Happiness Lounge is moving away from Chinese businessman chic (polo shirts and Playboy belts, be gone!) and heading in a more foreigner-friendly direction, including an all-new Italian lunch and dinner menu, available as of September 1. Highlights include Head Chef Cheng Kwok Fan's fine and creamy take on carbonara as well his crumbly and rich semifreddo. Best yet, go for a nightcap and take in the incredible views of the shimmering Olympic Green. 27 Beisihuan Zhonglu, Chaoyang District (5906 7002)*

PHOTO COURTESY OF PANGU HOTEL

## NIBBLES AND SIPS

This is certainly **Migas'** month, as they celebrate the seventh anniversary of their venerable Sanlitun location and the official opening (finally) of Migas Mercado in China World Mall. To celebrate the anniversary, they're changing up their weekly set lunch menu, taking all of the most popular options from the past seven years and combining them into one big menu that allows you to pick a main and two sides (RMB 88). Star dishes include paella and Migas' homemade sausages.

One of Nali Patio's other Spanish restaurants, **Agua**, has recently had a menu revamp courtesy of new chef Alberto Becerril. He has added 21 dishes to the summer menu, drawing on both traditional Spanish and global influences. Highlights include mini sandwiches filled with fried calamari on squid ink bread, and the marinated Japanese mackerel with rebujito jelly (a rebujito is a light sherry and lemonade cocktail).

The team behind **Cinker Pictures** in Taikooli North have kicked their Beijing presence up a notch over the past few months, opening rooftop lounge/screening area, Garden by Cinker Pictures, on the roof of Taikooli and Cinker Cinemas in Pacific Century Place, which is adjoined by PIC Café. The Garden serves mainly wine and cocktails, with a short menu of seafood-oriented dishes such as lobster rolls and fritto misto, while PIC Café serves modern Asian-themed dishes.

Ever the party pooper, Beijing's Great Wall of No Fun continues on its trail of destruction, this time laying to rest the vast majority of Fangjia Hutong's F&B businesses, including **Cellar Door** and **Fang Bar** (which moved to Shoubi Hutong), with more likely to come. An earlier victim of The Brickening, **Rager Pie**, has announced that they're rebranding to Hutonger Pie following the departure of founder Wilson Hailey. Two of his cohorts will rage on in their new Zhangzizhong Lu-adjacent shop, slinging a new range of pies featuring more of a Chinese twist while continuing to bake the old favorites.

Finally, if you have guests in town and have had a long morning of sightseeing on the south side of the city, consider retiring to **8 Qi Nian** in the New World Hotel near Chongwenmen for their RMB 98 dim sum buffet. The Cantonese restaurant has also recently revamped more than two-thirds of their a la carte menu, focusing on hearty, homestyle dishes such as roasted beef ribs with barbecue sauce and fried rice with Chinese sausage and mixed grains. If you visit in the evening, head upstairs to Yin on 12 after dinner to end the night with cocktails and great views over the heart of Beijing.

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# Full Moon Party

## WHAT TO SERVE AT A MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL DINNER

By Robynne Tindall

Falling on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month, Mid-Autumn Festival (中秋节 *zhongqiujie*) is traditionally a time to gather together with family and enjoy the full moon. Of course, no Chinese festival would be complete without a feast, and Mid-Autumn is no different. While the food most closely associated with Mid-Autumn Festival is mooncakes, there is plenty more to this holiday than those much-reviled pastries, including many dishes that make use of autumnal produce such as pumpkin and hairy crab. In 2017, Mid-Autumn Festival falls during the week-long October holiday, so there's no excuse not to get in the kitchen and cook up a feast (or at the very least, get together with friends and family for an indulgent meal) with some of the ingredients below.

### Taro

In the Jiangsu and Zhejiang dialects, the word for taro (芋头 *yutou*) sounds like "luck is inside," making it a popular vegetable to eat on festive occasions to bring luck for the year ahead, a tradition that began during the Qing dynasty. During Mid-Autumn Festival, taro is usually simply steamed and peeled, but it may also be added to dishes of pork or chicken braised in soy sauce. Taro is not only festive, but also nutritionally dense, containing up to three times more fiber than normal white potatoes.



### Pumpkin

Pumpkins (南瓜 *nangua*) represent the bounty of the autumn harvest and their round shape mirrors the full moon. Eating pumpkin on the night of Mid-Autumn Festival is believed to bring good health for the rest of the year. A popular legend tells the story of a girl who lived with her dying parents near South Mountain. One day, the girl found a pumpkin while working in the fields and took it home and cooked it for her parents. Miraculously, both parents recovered the next day. Pumpkin also gets its name, which literally means "south melon," from the South Mountain in the story.



## Duck

Duck is a popular addition to the Mid-Autumn Festival dinner table as the meat is thought to be particularly rich at this time of year. Different regions around China prepare the duck differently, often together with other popular autumnal ingredients. In Nanjing, for example, ducks are brined in a solution scented with seasonal osmanthus flowers and then served as a cold appetizer (桂花鸭 *guihuaya*, a variation on the popular Nanjing dish, salted duck 盐水鸭 *yanshuiya*). In Fujian, duck is often cooked with taro, while in Sichuan it is smoked and roasted.



## Hairy Crab

Hairy crabs (大闸蟹 *dazhaxie*) are in peak season during September and October, making them a highlight of any Mid-Autumn reunion dinner, particularly our Shanghai brethren. These shelled delicacies are one of the easiest Mid-Autumn foods to cook; simply give them a scrub with a clean toothbrush and then steam for around 10 minutes. Hairy crabs are considered to be a particularly “cold” (*yin*) food, so much so that they are potentially damaging to one’s health, so they are always served with warming foods such as ginger to balance out the cold, usually in the form of a dipping sauce made from Zhenjiang black vinegar and slivers of ginger. People also usually pair the dish with shots of warm Shaoxing wine, you know, for health reasons ...

## Pears

In Mandarin, the word for “pear,” 梨 *li*, is homophonous with the word for “leaving” or “separation,” 离 *li*. Usually, this means that you should avoid giving pears as gifts or eating them during happy occasions. However, eating a pear during Mid-Autumn Festival symbolizes your desire for reunification and your wish to avoid separation from your loved ones over the next year. Handily, Asian pears also just happen to pair well with the flavor of osmanthus wine.



## Osmanthus Wine

Walk through a garden in China in September or October and you are likely to catch the heady scent of osmanthus blossoms in full bloom. These fragrant flowers are used to scent everything from tea to jam, but it is osmanthus wine (桂花酒 *guihuaju*) in particular that is associated with Mid-Autumn Festival, when it is used to make a “reunion toast.” Chinese mythology holds that a sweet osmanthus tree grows on the moon where folk figure Wu Gang is tasked with endlessly cutting it down (Wu Gang is often described as the Chinese Sisyphus).



# HOME THAI

### SPICING UP TAIKOOLI

Daily 11.30am-10pm. S2-32, 3/F, Taikooli Sanlitun South, Chaoyang District (8435 3631)

朝阳区三里屯太古里南区3层S2-32

Taking over a space formerly occupied by Tairyō Teppanyaki as well as a short-lived farm-to-table restaurant concept, Home Thai is the latest addition to Taikooli's third-floor dining options. Avoiding the cliché dark wood and silk decor many Thai restaurants outside of home turf opt for, Home Thai's dining room is bright and modern, with an open kitchen dominating the front half of the restaurant. The menu, on the other hand, is an ode to classic Thai dishes, from pad Thai to satay to curries of various hues.

Said menu opens with a selection of appetizers, of which the prawn cakes (RMB 88) are the runaway hit, the four huge, greaseless deep-fried patties brimming with prawn flavor. The serving of signature tom yum soup (RMB 78) is as equally generous as the prawns and boasts a fair hit of chili (although real spice fiends will find that

it's the not fiercest version in town). This judicious use of spice is apparent throughout the menu – for example, the green curry chicken (RMB 68), which is fragrant rather than being smack-you-in-the-mouth hot. Our fellow diners also admired the curry's vibrant green color, which speaks to the use of plenty of fresh herbs and green chilies. Complement your meal with a strong, sweet Thai iced tea (RMB 28) or a bottle of imported Chang beer (RMB 28).

Home Thai has garnered quite a following since it opened a few months ago and, while you might have to wait for a table at peak hours, service is still brisk and efficient; you could be in and out in under an hour for lunch, especially if you stick to the simple rice and noodle dishes (which also happen to be fairly keenly priced at RMB 50-60). For lunch or dinner, Home Thai is a welcome addition to the Sanlitun dining scene. *Robynne Tindall*



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOME THAI



## BOTTEGA NALI PATIO

THE SAME GREAT PIZZA COMES ABOVE GROUND FOR  
A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Daily noon-2am. 2/F, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (6416 1752)  
朝阳区三里屯路81号那里花园2层

A trip to Bottega fills me with both glee and apprehension in equal amounts. Glee because since their opening, tucked away in central Sanlitun a mere two and a half years ago, I've gorged on their unmatched Neapolitan pizzas to the point of dough-clogged arteries more times than I'd like to admit, but to which my gut is living, wobbling proof. Apprehension because, well, reread that sentence. Since that time, Bottega has honed their craft, swiftly building a loyal customer base who returns for friendly service, an upbeat atmosphere, and a robust menu brimming with the rustic flavors of Italy, a continuation of the fratelli Salvo's patriline back in their home city of Naples.

This year has so far seen massive growth for the brothers, who closed their original subterranean haunt to open two new venues: their flagship Jinshang branch and this smaller restaurant on the second floor of Nali Patio. At the latter location, the improvements are subtle but efficacious. The black and white tiles and finished concrete walls remain but gone are the bare metal chairs whose slightly tacky feel were at odds to ordering a RMB 100 pizza. The move above ground has opened up the space immensely, replacing the once claustrophobic dining hall vibe with retractable doors and terrace chatter while retaining the enlivening semi-open kitchen. Now sandwiched between other hotbeds of drink and dining, Bottega can capitalize on cultivating their bar, their previous wine and Negroni joint Vesuvio also falling victim to the change in venue. Instead, the drinks here are a condensed selection of the top options from that menu, as well as gin and tonics and spritzes, to be

supplemented with a range of late-night food in the coming weeks.

For now, the regular menu remains largely unchanged and the three-ton oven imported from Italy ensures that their staple wood-fire pizzas remain the big draw. The capricciosa came beautifully charred and generously topped with shreds of Italian baked ham, mushrooms, artichoke, Neapolitan tomato sauce, and a thick and stringy layer of mozzarella cheese. As for the crust, well, let's say that if you fall into the "non-eating crust population," this entire thing will have been wasted on you, each bite full of chewy glory. The eggplant rollatini make for a fine lighter appetizer or side, with five thinly sliced pieces of grilled eggplant wrapped around balls of bouncy mozzarella, doused with a garlicky alla pizzaiola tomato sauce, and sprinkled with Parmesan. Other items that will have you coming back are the hulking and oozing burrata, the delicate pesto ravioli, the baci "kisses" pizza bites, and an extensive variety of pasta (but seriously, the pizza).

Once Bottega's evening routine settles into place, the restaurant looks to provide Nali Patio with a new vibrancy. Coupled with the massive Xinyuanli venue, the Salvo heritage and revamped arsenal looks to retain a fine tradition of pizza making in Beijing, physically far removed from where it all began in 1928, but methodically indistinguishable. For those reasons, it'll certainly take a fine contender to wrestle away their title of Beijing's Best Pizza come the end of our 2017 Pizza Cup. *Tom Arnstein*

## WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS



### CANNON'S

#### BURGER CUP DARK HORSE DEBUTS RETRO DIGS ON XINGFUCUN

Daily, 8am-2am. 55 Xingfucun Zhonglu, Chaoyang District (WeChat: moop83)  
朝阳区幸福村中路55号

Where there's a will, there's a way. More specifically, Sanlitun now has Will Cannon giving inner-city burger fans a way to eat his much-hyped burgers. And boy, does he have fans. Cannon's wares had until recently only been available at his outlying Gaobeidian restaurant, a decent trek for anyone who had an initial taste at this past summer's Burger Cup. That showing landed him way up in second place, an incredible feat for the relatively unknown fast food purveyor.

Now, far more customers will have access to his classic American diner-style eats courtesy of his new venue on Xingfucun Zhonglu. Chief among those options: the RMB 46 double deluxe cheese burger that gave them face – and drew a huge lineup – at this year's Burger Cup festival at Galaxy Soho. What made that burger a winner is Cannon's affinity for thin, greasy grilled patties ("I'm not big a fan of outdoor barbecue-style burgers," he tells us during a sneak peek visit a few days before their opening). The atmosphere aptly suits that throwback, diner-grilled burger – what with the vintage, picture-free menu behind the register, a counter with stools, the plush booths upstairs, the black-and-white checkered tile floor, and the adorable paper hats donned by the staff.

However, the menu items are of a much higher quality than what you'd find at a typical fast food spot. Just about everything is made in-house, from the buns to the sauces

and the soft-serve ice cream. A new, must-try option is the RMB 55 fried chicken plate that comes with side of greens, red beans, potato salad and a hearty yet fluffy biscuit, all of which stem from Cannon's Charleston, South Carolina roots. The chicken (available in breast, thigh or leg cuts) has a sumptuously crispy batter that coats, and contrasts with, the juicy underlying poultry meat perfectly. He brines the chicken in sweet tea (a mainstay Deep South beverage) which gives the skin a darker color and unique flavor.

The Gaobeidian branch's greatest hits are also on hand: RMB 44 pulled pork sandwiches, RMB 37 Buffalo chicken sandwiches laced with an uncommonly subtle blue cheese sauce, RMB 35 cauliflower veggie burgers, the spicy RMB 37 Sinophile Burger and savory sloppy Joes that will remind North Americans of yesteryear's family dinners. The RMB 30 milkshakes are also true winners, especially the orange variety, tailored to match the Creamsicles Cannon gobbled up as a boy. Alternatively, wash it down with a pint of Vedett Blond (RMB 35) or Boulevard Tank 7 (RMB 38).

By incorporating elements of both handmade gourmet and low-key fast food, Cannon's hits an elusive target, and it'll be sure to have an explosive impact on the Sanlitun dining scene. *Kyle Mullin*



## X

... *xianbing* 馅饼

Think of *xianbing* (literally “stuffed pancake”) as big, portable potstickers. The dough is slightly thicker and chewier than that used for potstickers, but the concept is similar: a minced meat or vegetable filling wrapped in wheaten dough and then seared until piping hot and delicious. *Xianbing* are common throughout northern China, particularly in Chinese-Islamic communities, where fillings made from beef or lamb mixed with onion are common.

... *xiaolongbao* 小笼包

Is there any greater joy than popping open a proper *xiaolongbao* (small steamed dumplings filled with soup) and sucking out all that delicious, soupy goodness inside? *Xiaolongbao* are the high-stakes game of the dim sum table, a challenge even for those with commensurate chopstick skills. Ensure you don't lose any of that delicious broth by placing your spoon close to the dumpling and grabbing it with your chopsticks at the thickest part where the pleats of the dough come together.

... *xiangcai* 香菜

Ah, *xiangcai*, the great divider. Whether you call it coriander or cilantro, there's bound to be at least one person at every dinner table who can't stand the stuff. Those who hate it are usually unwavering in their belief that it tastes like soap, which scientists have found is due to a variation in the set of genes related to smell and taste. Whether you're genetically averse to cilantro or not, you'll have a hard time avoiding it in northern Chinese cuisine, where it pops up in everything from *liangcai* to the sesame sauce that accompanies lamb hot pot.

... *XO sauce* XO 酱

XO sauce takes its name from the “XO extra old” appellation given to Cognac, a nod to the luxuriousness of its ingredients, which include dried shrimp, dried scallops, and Jinhua ham. These ingredients are cooked down to a sticky paste with plenty of onions and garlic, which can then be used as a dipping sauce or in stir-fried dishes. Despite its ubiquity on menus nowadays, XO was actually only invented in Hong Kong during the 1980s.

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# PEBBLES COURTYARD

## PEBBLES BRINGS NEW LIFE TO BEIJING'S MEXICAN FOOD SCENE

Daily 11.30am-11pm. 74 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District (8404 0767)

卵石庭院：东城区五道营胡同74号

For many years, Wudaoying's Pebbles Courtyard has been associated with reliable Tex-Mex fare like burritos and tacos. However, after recently returning from a year studying at prestigious culinary school Kendall College in Chicago, owner Ray Heng is hoping to change that perception with a new menu of modern Mexican cuisine.

The menu draws on influences from the Oaxaca region, a cuisine typified by grilling and subtle, more complex spicing, and one that has been popularized by Ray's longtime inspiration and mentor, chef Rick Bayless, who Ray has had the chance to meet and work with on several occasions over the years. While the term "grill" may suggest a meat-heavy menu, it is actually the vegetarian dishes where Ray's creativity really shines through. Vegetarian enchiladas (RMB 98) are filled with an intriguing combination of kale, nettles, and onions mixed with cream cheese and goat's cheese, for a filling that is creamy without being too heavy. The star of this dish,

however, is the tangy-sweet pasilla chili sauce enhanced with dried Chinese hawthorn fruit.

Nevertheless, carnivores will find plenty to appreciate on the menu too, such as the wood fire-grilled chicken breast (RMB 98), which manages to skillfully balance a tricky selection of flavors, including agaric-marinated chicken, mashed sweet potatoes, and a creamy sauce made from mild green poblano chilies.

These plated dishes will make up the bulk of the evening menu, while daytime diners can still expect to find quicker, classic bites such as tacos, burritos, and quesadillas (albeit all with an upgrade in sophistication). Case in point: the taquitos, which are plated like a high-quality restaurant appetizer but still boast all the vibrant flavors of their street food cousins.

Alongside other recent openings such as Q Mex Taqueria, Pebbles' new menu is a testament to the increasing sophistication of Beijing's Mexican food scene, a trend we hope to see continue. *Robynne Tindall*



PHOTO COURTESY OF PEBBLES COURTYARD



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Daily 11.30am-2pm, 5-9pm. 6 Beiyin Hutong, Xicheng District (6601 0101)

青海大厦餐厅：西城区背阴胡同6号

The façade of the Qinghai Provincial Hotel in the heart of Xidan is not the kind of place to fill you with culinary confidence, with all its gray marble slabs stacked together to form one singular and imposing giant marble gray slab. However, by the time you've woven your way past the idyllic murals of crystal-blue lakes and snow-capped mountains, the sound of chatter from the restaurant is conspicuously audible and positively upbeat. Yes, people do choose to eat here, making Qinghai a winner already in the generally sad Prov Gov canon.

The high plateaus of Qinghai, found in China's most central province, have produced a people of robust stock equal to the centuries of sustenance eating that once fueled their nomadic lifestyle: fatty chunks of lamb, thick-cut noodles, chewy baked breads, and wholesome vegetables largely cooked using Muslim Hui culinary methods.

Beijing's official renditions do the province proud, meaning that you're likely to waddle out of here, eyes darting for the nearest nap-happy space. Warm your tastebuds (and insides) with a preliminary bowl of glutinous and bouncy *liangpi*, bathed in a rich chili sauce and a healthy sprinkling of *jiucai* for a smooth and warm palate-tingler.

Then, before your belly starts to swell, dive into a pot of hearty mutton stew, laden with cuts of fatty meat, sweet potato noodles, peppers, onion, and covered in a gravy

that'll have you mopping up every last drop – that is, if you can finish off the obscuring contents.

Balance your gorge with a plate of fresh *liuhuacai*, a fibrous (and borderline tough) fungus, which having been soaked in sugar water and sprinkled with chili oil and garlic, should help soak up some of that gravy now sloshing around your gut.

However, the star of the show, both in name and taste, is the "Dog Piss Pancakes" (*gou jiao niao*). These ever-so-slightly sweet, crisp, and veritably deleterious triangles of gooey bliss have an inner consistency close to that of rice cakes thanks to the deluge of thick oil added throughout their preparation, leaving a weighty bread that will have your arteries squirming and your mouth watering in a battle of depravity versus longevity.

If you're still prone by this point, wash it all down with an ice-cold Gansu Huang He beer or cap the meal off with a sizeable bowl of *suannai*, the best variation that I've had the pleasure of trying to force down, its equally creamy and sweet consistency balancing the sour finish.

Coupled with friendly staff, don't be fooled by the menacing impression of its housing. The Qinghai Provincial Government restaurant proves a serene culinary escape to the grasslands from its otherwise dreary and materialist-driven surroundings. *Tom Arnstein*



## FUHUAZHAI CHINESE PASTRY SHOP

### RETURN TO THE QING DYNASTY WITH ROYAL MANCHU SWEETS

Daily 9am-9pm. 1/F, Huguo Xintiandi, 85 Huguosi Dajie, Xicheng District (8322 9001)

富华斋饽饽铺：西城区新街口街道护国寺街85号护国新天地一层

Everyone likes pastries for their alchemy of fat, flour and air, no matter civilians or royalty. When we talk about Chinese pastries, one name stands above the rest: Daoxiangcun.

Daoxiangcun started in Suzhou, Jiangsu province in 1773, and later brought the flavors of the south to Beijing in 1895, remaining popular among the capital's locals ever since.

*Bobo* is a Manchurian word for any pastry made of millet, corn, and sorghum flour, savory or sweet, such as rolled donkeys (驴打滚 *lv dagun*), glutinous rice rolled in soy bean flour; or sachima (萨其玛 *saqima*), strands of fried batter with sugar syrup.

Fuhuazhai Chinese Pastry Shop, also endearingly known as the Fuhuazhai *bobu* restaurant, was founded by Wang Xifu, whose grandfather was an Imperial chef in the Qing Imperial kitchen. Following his retirement, Wang hunted for ancestral recipes and restored the classic flavors of pastries once enjoyed by royals in the palace. Today, the whole family continues Wang's grandfather's cake making traditions.

The outside of Fuhuazhai recalls a miniature Forbidden City, with its crimson wooden doors, green frames, and its name proudly displayed in gold font on a formidable black plaque. Inside, 15 different varieties of Chinese pastries are displayed neatly across a large rosewood table where customers order before making their way to either the main

room to sit in traditional armchairs, on a *kang* (a traditional wooden bed adorned with imperial yellow cushions), or at any of several marble tables in the adjacent room.

Those with the sweetest of teeth will want to buy one of each cake, a simple task given that most are available by the piece. Our favorite? The RMB 12 rose bean cake (玫瑰豆蓉酥 *meigui dou rong su*) for its flaky pastry with a soft rose petals and mung bean filling that is both subtle and smooth, but never too sweet. We also like enjoyed the aforementioned rolled donkeys (RMB 12 for six pieces or RMB 6 for three), bite-sized servings of steamed glutinous rice layered with brown sugar and sprinkled with soy bean flour. If you like pea cake, you'll certainly want to try the rendition here, *wandou gao* (豌豆糕, RMB 19 for four pieces).

Service was impeccable; the staff treated us with the utmost respect – a monument to their legacy of royal service – and after having filled on Wang's recollections of pastries past, supine on the *kang* that had served generations of people before me. Listening to the Chinese classical instruments play gently in the background, there was no way to help feeling spirited back in time by Fuhuazhai, connected to my Manchu ancestors, and shielded from the bustling, modern world outside. *Tracy Wang*

## P.S. WE ATE YOU

### whole grilled mackerel

**Tribe, RMB 168**

A highlight from Tribe's late summer menu, this whole grilled mackerel is simple in its presentation and cooking, using only a pinch of seasoning, but the succulent meat and moist-to-crispy skin will have you and yours fighting it out for each remaining morsel. Add a little of the mild homemade sambal jam to make the flavors pop.

### nut butter and coconut froyo

**Glo Fitness, RMB 28**

This gooey cup of vanilla bean coconut froyo topped with wild nut butter is marketed as a healthy probiotic supplement and a healthy treat to follow your meal or workout, but none of that will matter once it actually touches your lips because you'll forget what macros even are until every last ounce has been licked from the bowl.

### homestyle coca-cola chicken neck

**Hatchery, RMB 30**

Hatchery's newest outing with New Zealand's free-range rotisserie chicken brand Bird on a Wire has had us going back for more since our first taste. On one occasion, upon filling up on so much chicken noodle soup and burgers that we could barely move, these Coca-Cola-glazed chicken necks sat untouched. No mind, however, as they make for the perfect *dabao* for a Netflix-and-chill-worthy snack, each vertebrae hiding a puddle of rich and sticky sauce just waiting to be slobbered.

### chilled chive rockefeller oyster

**Sureño, RMB 90 (available upon request)**

Name something that slips down easier than a hulking, fresh Rockefeller oyster. How about a hulking, fresh Rockefeller oyster slathered in butter and then sprinkled with dried, ground chives? We downed this thing weeks ago and can still taste the overpowering and exquisite combination of cream, salt, and brine at the back of throat.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HATCHERY



# ONE THIRD

## A PREVIEW OF THE AMBITIOUS NEW CLUB FROM SIR TEEN AND BBC

(Grand opening set for after the October holiday). 6 Workers' Stadium West Road, Chaoyang District  
工体西路6号

It'd be an understatement to say Douglas Williams and Quinn Johnson hope to up the ante with their new soon-to-be-opened bar. The most glaring difference is size: their recently shuttered former spot, Boot, Bottle, and Cigar (AKA BBC, one of the many victims of Beijing's Great Brickening of 2017) was a diminutive 30sqm, the entirety of which could fit in the space behind the bar at this new joint, the vast, 3,000sqm One Third, which is slated to hold its grand opening after the October holiday.

Sure, a gargantuan bottle service dance club – outfitted with a small elevator for hired dancers in steampunk garb to ascend to a catwalk above the bar before busting a move – all might sound diametrically opposed to the neat craft cocktail lounge rep that Williams and Johnson built for themselves at their prior, more niche establishment. But that's why One Third's owners – who also run the highly popular Gongti dance club Sir Teen – decided to partner with the BBC alums, to adorn this new club with a splash of class and creativity that may have otherwise gone neglected.

Though when we stopped by the Gongti venue (situated in the same complex as Sir Teen, the new Heaven and Joe's Bar and Kitchen) it was for an extremely early sneak peek, with construction well under way but nowhere near finished, we were happy to see just how spacious the venue is, and to hear about Williams and

Johnson's plans. They hope to serve the drinks at around RMB 80-100 per glass, along with a range of bottled cocktails. They say many of those cocktails will be aged in the 100 wooden barrels behind the bar. Fresh juices, numerous bitters, a range of fortified wines, and plenty of high-quality spirits are among the goodies that they plan to keep in stock.

Johnson likens the team's vision for the club with those that took New York's Meatpacking District by storm in the late 90s. And while many of the suave cocktail enthusiasts that frequented BBC might never imagine themselves in a dance club à la Sir Teen, they'd be unable to deny the number of world-class, household name DJs that that venue has attracted in recent months, a feat that its team aims to repeat, if not exceed, at One Third.

"We want to combine craft cocktails and high-quality drinks with bottle service," Williams says, insisting the two need not be mutually exclusive, but should instead complement each other. And if the venue can pull that tricky, but laudably unique balancing act off, then they'll likely appeal to a wider range of patrons than most establishments across town. Indeed, a place where dance floor fiends and cocktail connoisseurs can make an oh-so-rare rendezvous would certainly bring about a welcome shakeup to Beijing's bar scene. *Kyle Mullin*



PHOTO: JUNI YOU



## FORTY+ TAPHOUSE

NEW TAPHOUSE IN CHAOYANGMEN HOUSES CITY'S LARGEST AND BEST IMPORTED DRAFT BEER SELECTION

Daily 10am-late. East side of Chaowaimen Compound, 26 Chaowai Dajie, Chaoyang District (185 1122 1101)  
40+精酿啤酒餐吧俱乐部：朝阳区朝外大街26号朝外门公寓东侧底商

Tucked away on the east side of the Chaowaimen Compound, Forty+ Taphouse is a bit hard to find, but its off-the-main-street location means that it's a quiet escape from the nearby bustle of CBD. The 43-beer selection, which provides the bar its unpretentious name, is made up of a number of their own brews, a few from domestic breweries, and the remainder are imports. They apparently even made a point of installing one more tap than their nearest competitor, NBeer Pub Wukesong, which features 42 beers on tap.

The eight beers made at Forty+'s brewery in Fengtai include Gentleman Weizenbier (4.5 percent ABV), Amigo Light Ale (5.1 percent ABV), Buddy Dunkel (5 percent ABV), Rock 'n' Roll Stout (6.5 percent ABV), Pepper Stout (8 percent ABV), Trance Angel IPA (6.5 percent ABV), and Maomao Cider (5.3 percent ABV). A flight of four costs RMB 88 and one beer rotates on special each day for RMB 30-35 a pint.

However, where Forty+ really shines is in its list of imports (RMB 45-68), which will bring suds to the most cynical of beer-lover's eyes – from a hoppy and juicy Rogue 7 Hop IPA, to the Aftermouth IPA from Black Market, Lupulingus IIPA and Armageddon IPA (both from Epic), Undercover IPA, Breakfast Stout from Founders, Hop

Fiction Pale Ale from BrewDog, and several options from Ballast Point. Most special, perhaps, is the Prairie Bomb Imperial Stout with its outrageous 13 percent ABV, and our long-term love, Lizard of Koz (10.5 percent ABV) from Founders, both of which sell for RMB 68 per 300ml – likely the best price you'll find in Beijing.

Aside from the taps, which are the focus of the sleek, all-wood bar and its 20-liter keg bar stools, the 200sqm space is filled with comfortable leather sofas, a pool table, and a surplus of TVs. Line your stomach with a range of salads, burgers, a sausage platter (RMB 98), and various bar snacks (RMB 28-48). Although simple, the in-house baked breadsticks (RMB 38) are particularly tasty having been made using beer-infused batter from 40+'s various brews, making each batch a uniquely perfect accompaniment to the main event – more beer.

With the so-far unmatched assortment and excellent prices of these well-picked and rotating domestic and imported beers, Forty+ Taphouse is the ideal venue to visit with friends to spend an evening exploring the world of craft beer. We can see good things happening for this big pub and can't wait to slowly slurp away at each of their taps. *Tracy Wang*



# THE ROYAL TREATMENT

FAMILY FIZZ SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES AS BEIJING'S IMPERIAL AMBASSADORS

By Robynne Tindall

**B**eijing was home to the imperial family for hundreds of years but how many of us really get to see the city through the eyes of an emperor? A recent large-scale O2O campaign run by Visit Beijing and Air China aimed to give a lucky social media influencer just that, taking them on a three-day journey through Beijing's heritage sites and imperial palaces as the "Imperial Ambassador."

After a hotly contested online campaign that attracted more than 2,000 entries from 80 countries, English vloggers Family Fizz won a three-day imperial experience in Beijing. The Fizz family is Darren (dad), Georgie (mum), Mia (age 12), and Sienna (5). We spoke to them about traveling in Beijing as a family of vegans and tobogganing down the Great Wall.

**I know that you had wanted to visit China for a long time before you won the Imperial Ambassadorship. What attracted you to China?**

**Georgie:** My great-grandfather was Chinese and although he never lived in China, it was a part of my life growing up.

**How did you find traveling in Beijing as a family?**

**Georgie:** People here really love children so you're made to feel really welcome. All the activities have been really exciting too. We got to make some kites, dress up, and even walk on the Great Wall of China. The Great Wall seems quite challenging but there's a small section you can walk up on the Wall that's quite flat, then you can take a slide on the way down [the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall].

**Mia:** We literally felt like kings and queens!

**You have all been vegan for five years. What has the food been like?**

**Georgie:** The organizers went out of their way to set up lots of Imperial Chinese vegan dining experiences for us, which was amazing. Obviously, tofu is a very popular ingredient here and we found out that it was also often prepared by the palace chefs as part of imperial banquets since it was considered a health food.

We also really liked some of the imperial snacks we tried, such as these small glutinous rice dumplings filled with red bean paste [*aiwowo*, a favorite of Empress Dowager Cixi]. This was also our first time trying jasmine tea!

**Darren:** We were so lucky to have had many of our dining experiences arranged for us, but overall, as long as you're confident and you make clear "I can eat this" and "I can't eat that," you can have an amazing feast. We really liked a restaurant called Vegetarian Tiger – it was amazing and so cheap!

**What was the absolute highlight of the trip for you?**

**Georgie:** We drove out to Gubei Water Town, about two hours from Beijing, and stayed there overnight in this amazing hotel. Gubei Water Town is a reconstruction of a beautiful Chinese town, with loads of restaurants, hotels, and things to do. At night you can see the Great Wall lit up in the mountains just outside of town as well. We will definitely go back there on our next visit to China.

*You can find Family Fizz on YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and follow Visit Beijing on Twitter (@beijingofficial), Facebook (@BeijingChinaOfficial), and Instagram (@visit\_beijing).*

# GO

FORBIDDEN CITY FOR KIDS // TAIPEI // TRAIN HOPPING // CAT CAFÉS



## **2017 NHL CHINA GAMES**

**Sep 23 - The Los Angeles Kings and the Vancouver Canucks face off at the Wukesong Arena this fall, marking the second of two preseason games (the first takes place in Shanghai) and the NHL's debut in China. The league's start on Chinese ice signals NHL's run at FIFA and the NBA's mega success on the Mainland, which honestly seems like an elusive goal. That doesn't mean we won't revel in watching some of the best hockey players in the world shoot pucks, vie to outskate each other, and perhaps even duke it out. RMB 160-1,880. 3pm. Wukesong Arena**



# MAKING THE FORBIDDEN CITY FUN FOR KIDS

**NEW SPACES, EXHIBITS, AND DRAGONS GALORE**

By Jeremiah Jenne

PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The Forbidden City should be fascinating for children. It's a palace where princesses dreamed and schemed for love, emperors and courtiers plotted power plays in remote courtyards, and epic battles were fought in the shadow of the throne room. And dragons. Lots and lots of dragons. Dragons everywhere. You can't walk two steps without coming face-to-face with this serpentine emblem of royal power. The Forbidden City is basically Game of Thrones minus the gratuitous nudity. (Although adult visitors will want to know that there was plenty of that going on within the palace walls as well ...)

But let's face it: The Forbidden City can be a test of endurance for most people, not just those young folks with shorter legs and even shorter attention spans. Making a three-hour walk through an old palace appealing to younger visitors is all about how you approach your Forbidden City trip.

### Consider the Crowds

On peak days, the hordes of be-hatted, flag-following tour groups can be intimidating, especially from a child's perspective. Popular sites like the Hall of Supreme Harmony (the main "throne room") are often unavoidably crowded, but new sections of the palace which have recently been opened to the public offer routes through the Forbidden City which are still relatively untrammelled by the package tourists. As you enter the first major courtyard in the Forbidden City, you'll see a river running from east to west. Follow the curve of the river to gates along either side of the courtyard. These gates will take you outside the main central route and to lovely garden paths which run parallel to the usual tourist trail in the center of the palace. (If you take the western gate and head right, there's a lovely café about 200 meters north along the path that takes advantage of the old imperial ice storerooms.)

### Count the Dragons

Kids love to count things, and the Forbidden City has a seemingly endless supply of dragon iconography. By one estimate, the central Hall of Supreme Harmony contains over 12,000 dragon icons alone. And that's just one building, albeit the largest and most important building in the palace. If kids are bored of counting, try sketching. There is considerable dragon diversity in the Forbidden City. Take a sketchbook and pencils and when legs get tired, find a spot to sit and doodle a dragon. If scaly reptiles aren't your children's favorite thing, there are a number of other mythical beasts on display, as well as flowery patterns and decorations in almost every courtyard.

### New Exhibits Designed for Kids

The Forbidden City staff is aware of the challenges of getting kids interested in the palace. Through October, a new exhibit uses bilingual interactive and multimedia exhibits to educate young visitors about what life was like in the palace during the 18th century. The exhibit is part of the "My Home is the Forbidden City" project launched in 2008 as an educational outreach for young people to learn about its history. The current exhibit is located in the Jingren Gong (Palace of Great Benevolence) located in the northeastern section of the Forbidden City.

Finally, remember that according to legend, the Forbidden City has 9,999 rooms. Even with some areas still under renovation, it's not possible to see the whole palace in one day. See what you want to see at your own pace – and that of younger companions. The palace has stood for nearly 600 years; it'll be there waiting for a repeat visit in the future, especially if kids are intrigued by what they see on their first trip.



## TAIPEI

A WEEKEND AWAY IN ONE OF ASIA'S  
BEST GOURMET DESTINATIONS

By Robynne Tindall



A melting pot of Chinese, Japanese, and Western influences, Taipei is a fascinating city with plenty to see and do, although the main attraction for longtime Beijing residents may be the city's slower pace of life. At just over three hours away via direct flight (via Hainan, Air China, or EVA), Taiwan's capital makes the perfect destination for a weekend getaway. Once you arrive, the Taoyuan MRT, just opened this year, takes you from the airport to downtown (Taipei Main Station) in just over 45 minutes (TWD 160). Be sure you get the express train rather than the commuter train.

**What to see and eat:** We could list a few of Taipei's main sights – the National Palace Museum, skyline-dominating Taipei 101 – but for many, the city's main draw is the food, and you can certainly plan your trip entirely around meals at Taipei's brilliant selection of restaurants.

Fuel up for a day of sightseeing with a hearty traditional Taiwanese breakfast of *youtiao*, rice rolls, and salty soy milk. Fu Hang Soy Milk in Zhongzheng District draws huge crowds if people-watching intrigues, or you can find branches of reliable Yong He Soy Milk King around the city.

The original branch of Din Tai Fung will be high on the list for many visitors to Taipei, although your enthusiasm for dumplings may be dampened by the inevitable one to two-hour wait. For an alternative, head just down the street to Kao Chi, a venerable Taipei brand whose *xiaolongbao* are just as good.

Kao Chi is on Yongkang Street, a popular food street where you can sample a number of Taiwanese specialties, including mango shaved ice at Smoothie House and *dan tsaï* noodles at Du Hsiao Yueh. Just off the main drag is Yong



Kang Beef Noodles, renowned for their intensely fragrant red-braised beef noodle soup. You will be asked how spicy you want your soup, and we recommend even the most devout chili heads exercise restraint in order to let the flavor of the broth shine through.

For something a little more upscale, book a table at the uber-cool Mume, where the team of three young chefs creates intriguing dishes that fuse Taiwanese ingredients with new Nordic principles. Don't miss the bruléed chicken liver parfait scented with Shaoxing wine. After eating, head to W Taipei's slick Yen Bar (just a few subway stops away) for Asian-inspired cocktails and panoramic views of the city.

**Where to stay:** If you're only visiting Taipei for a few days, it pays to stay somewhere central with good transport connections. Dongmen Station – at the intersection of the Tamsui-Xinyi and Zhonghe-Xinlu MRT lines – is close to

Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall and the aforementioned Yongkang Street, and is just a few stops away from Taipei Main Station. Hotel 73, which is just a few hundred meters from the station, offers clean, good-value rooms.

**Further afield:** If you have more than a couple of days to spend in Taipei, consider taking a day trip to the quaint hillside town of Jiufen, around an hour away from central Taipei by train or bus. The center of the town is a little touristy but does offer beautiful views out over the Pacific Ocean. A 10-minute taxi ride from Jiufen lies Houtong Cat Village, a former mining town that has become famous for its large cat population. Whether or not you appreciate our feline friends, Houtong is a good base for hikes into the surrounding hills, and a fine place to start burning off what you just ate.

FEATURE

# TRAIN HOPPING IN SOUTHERN CHINA

**A GUIDE TO EXPLORING SICHUAN'S SIGHTS BY RAIL**

By Tautvile Daugelaite

Nothing illustrates the size and contradictions of China more vividly than trying to fit all the points of interest into a tiny 10-day itinerary. Cursed with eternally delayed flights but blessed with amusing train rides stretching through a series of dusks and dawns, roaming around Sichuan and Chongqing puts you in the line of fire for endless curiosity and unbridled hospitality.



Sichuan's southern charm has more than likely had an impact on you even before your journey commences. After all, Sichuan's cuisine is the most popular in China, meaning there's a chance that one of your favorite dishes here is likely to have originated in China's "province of abundance" but missing perhaps one special ingredient: the warmth of service that you quickly learn to expect in the south.

If you're longing to experience the source of those Sichuan flavors in all their fiery glory, then it helps to become familiar with China's most convenient mode of transportation: its railway. Train tickets in China are not that hard to come across – as long as you're not traveling during national holidays – and for the short rides, you might not need to worry and simply buy any available ticket once you arrive at the station. The stakes are higher and your odds worse with overnight trains, since sleepers often sell out a week or more in advance. The silver lining: even if the tickets on the planned route are sold out, changing direction based on available seats invites a wealth of possible (mis?)adventures.

### Preparation

Entertainment on board is old-fashioned but plentiful. Among the best on offer: chatty and kind-hearted neighbors pushing food down each other's throats, playing cards, or simply discussing the outcome of the latest football match. The rules on the train are not aggressively enforced, but passengers normally choose to follow them anyway. Smokers stroll down to the ends of the cars, *ayis* carry palms full of mango peel to the trash cans, and virtually everyone kicks off their slippers and sleeps when the lights go out just before 11pm. You can also revel in the train-wide sport that is continuous snacking. What can be sweeter than cracking open some sunflower seeds while staring blankly into the hilly, cloud-covered landscape of Sichuan?

### Chengdu

Convenient placement, pandas, hot pot, and contemporary Chinese hip-hop have all helped to put Chengdu on the modern map. Crowned by UNESCO as the first "city of gastronomy" in Asia, Chengdu is more notable for being the place to burn your stomach lining and then do it all over again the next day.

Strolling around Wenshu Monastery – built during the Tang dynasty (618-907) – with tea houses and deep, green foliage-lined paths carving around the temples, makes for an afternoon well spent. The restored "old"

streets surrounding the monastery are another attempt to provide an authentic experience but may now have more in common with Chengdu's bar street, which in itself seems painfully similar to Beijing's Houhai dives, but does at least present a stunning view of the picturesque Anshun Bridge.

While visiting the panda sanctuary is a must, it would be wise to avoid going on the hottest of summer days since all the pandas head indoors if the mercury is over 26C. They are still unmistakably adorable regardless.

Fanning with a tropical leaf on the riverside is a rewarding experience on its own, but to make it even more so, some struggle should be incorporated. The Giant Buddha of Le Shan is but a one-hour train ride from Chengdu. However, visiting on the weekend should be avoided at all costs given that the queue reaches inhumane lengths. If a weekday trip isn't possible, hop on the boat that passes by the feet of the Giant Buddha instead, not only sparing you from the queueing but also allowing some of the best snaps of the Buddha itself.

### Chongqing

Chongqing is one of the four hottest places in China, where the scorching sun and suffocating humidity work together to make you sweat violently. That being said, the city is a great hub for train-hunters, and despite the all-clouding construction and occasional walk in a dust storm, the eclectic selection of architecture spoils travelers with views that stand apart from other mainland destinations.

### Wulong Park

Lush green and flourishing flora abounds in southern China, especially in Wulong county. The Three Natural Stone Bridges in Wulong Park (an almost three-hour train ride from Chongqing) is the largest natural bridge cluster in Asia. Their majestic average height of 200 meters leaves visitors tilting their heads back in a quiet moment between incessant picture snapping.

Aside from the pleasant and relatively flat route surrounding the natural bridges, Wulong is also comprised of karst caves that are located in a comparatively remote area, providing a break from human activity and shrouding the caves in relative quiet, making them feel untouched.

These are but a few of the south's exhaustive sites but a simple itinerary like this can be a good way to get your bearings before committing to a long-term exploration of all the beauty China's breadbasket has to offer.

FEATURE

# GET A CASE OF THE WARM-FUZZIES

**FIND HEARTWARMING CUDDLES AT THESE 5 BEIJING CAT CAFÉS**

By Tracy Wang

Whether you're a dog or cat person, we can all agree that life in bustling Beijing is stressful enough to make us hack up a proverbial hairball. So what better way could there be to deal with such tension than petting a fluffy, adorable kitty with one hand while holding a soothing cup of java in the other? Thankfully there's no shortage of such cafés around town, all of which give you the immediate benefits of chilling with kitties, while saving you the responsibility that comes with ownership.



### Meow Town Café

On the first floor of Shimao Gongsan Office Building, Meow Town Café is both massive and tidy. For extra cleanliness, they separate the dining area, which serves numerous coffee options along with desserts and simple Western food, and cat-petting area, which has a modest four felines. Before entering the cat area (RMB 50), you'll be asked to sanitize your hands and put disposable bags over your shoes. "Cats are respected and treated well here, that's why I like to come often," one frequent patron says.

*Daily 8am-9pm. 1/F, Shimao Gongsan Office Building, 13 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang District (138 1177 1214)*

猫屯咖啡：朝阳区工体北路13号院世茂工三写字楼一楼

### Lovely Time

Located on the second floor of Fortune Mall, Lovely Time gives the area's worker bees a chance to wind down with some furry one-on-one time. A minimum expenditure of RMB 50 is required per person on cakes, tea, coffee, and juice. According to the Dianping reviews, the food is surprisingly good here and the cats are active and eager to play.

*Daily 10am-10pm. 2/F, Fortune Mall, Dongsanhuan Zhonglu, Chaoyang District (186 1145 8117)*

猫语时光：朝阳区东三环中路财富购物中心2层

### Miaolegemi Cat Bar

There are 50-plus cats (!) of around 15 different breeds wandering around this Sanlitun Soho café, including American shorthair, as well as some ragdoll, Siamese, and Bengal. There's a minimum expenditure of RMB 40 per person on coffee, juice, egg tarts, pasta, or cat food (which we don't suggest eating yourself). Miaolegemi also sells kittens, however, one Dianping user shared

concerns about the café, writing: "Sometimes I noticed that the cats' eyes are red from some kind of transmitted eye disease. Hopefully the staff will take care of them."

*Daily 9.30am-midnight. West Entrance, 1/F, Bldg 2, Sanlitun Soho, Chaoyang District (6777 7277)*

喵了个咪Bar：朝阳区三里屯SOHO2号一层西侧

### Meow Bar & Coffee

Also in Sanlitun Soho, Meow is located on the second floor of the same building as Miaolegemi. Compared to their popular neighbor below, Meow serves coffee (RMB 20-37), juice (RMB 30-35), sandwiches (RMB 20-45), and dessert (RMB 35) at slightly cheaper prices but the ambiance could use some work (see: puke-green walls). There are over 20 cats on site, most of them pure breeds that spend much of the day being taken care of by staff in an adjacent glass room.

*Daily 10am-10pm. 203, Bldg 2, Sanlitun Soho, Chaoyang District (5935 9102)*

猫屋主题咖啡厅：朝阳区三里屯SOHO2号商场203

### Maoxiaoyuan

Dubbing itself a *xiaoyuan* (yard) is modest; Maoxiaoyuan is a verified cat mansion in the hutongs. Tucked away on Beiluogu Xiang, Maoxiaoyuan boasts 40 cats, 15 of which take turns being "on duty" throughout the huge five-floor space. The food here is passable and includes waffles, pasta, pizza, and cakes served on cat-shaped plates, as well drinks like coffee and milk tea adorned with cute and frothy cat patterns. They also have two other nearby locations at Houhai and Nanluogu Xiang.

*Daily 10am-10pm. 14 Beixia Wazi Hutong, Dongcheng District (5914 6478)*

猫小院：东城区北下洼子胡同14号



Brewery	IBU	ABV	450ml
汤山	8	4.3%	35
r.Li	12	5.8%	35
Beer	10	4.8%	38
汤山	8	4.3%	35
r.Li	35	6.2%	40
BoxingCat	20	4.9%	45
京A	10	5.5%	40(330ml)
e Gao	30	5.3%	40
y Wine Gao	45	6.6%	40(330ml)

IPA	
5 滩	Tan IPA
8 朱元璋	Ming IPA
12 西津渡	XiJinDu IPA
30 行家	TKO IPA
16 李鬼	LiGui IPA
X 相竹以沫	Bamboo Leaf IPA
STOUT	
26 香草咖啡	Vanilla Coffee
29 牛奶世涛	Milk Stout
25 血滴子	The Bloody Blade

Brewery	IBU	ABV
Reberg	38	5.6%
Shan Town	48	6.3%
汤山	24	5.2%
BoxingCat	62	6.3%
NBeer	85	6.9%
Epic&道酿	50	7.5%
NBeer	25	5.5%
	22	6.1%
	75	9.8%

# LOST PLATE'S BOOZY BREWERY TOUR

EXPLORE LOCAL MICROBREWS WITH BEIJING'S ONLY BREWERY

TOUR

By Tracy Wang

In a city famous for its more than 3,000 years of history, relics of the past offer stark and stunning contrast as a backdrop for Beijing's rapid changes. Today's developments are no less "Beijing" than the temples of dynasties past, and the city's locally owned eateries and breweries are as unique and attractive to visitors as the historical specimens surrounding them. Bridging the gap between the attractions of yesteryear and today is Lost Plate's new tuk tuk-powered beer tour.

Lost Plate is best known for their food tours centering around locals' favorite family run restaurants in Xi'an, Chengdu, and Beijing. This new, beer-focused tour began

in April and is composed of a trip to three or four of the city's best and most popular taprooms and brewpubs, providing guests a chance to taste over 12 different varieties of beer during an enlightening pub crawl. The choices are carefully considered and, on our tour, happened to feature a few of my go-to watering holes in town. That being said, I still learned a lot of from the knowledgeable and affable guides on hand, but you'll find no spoilers here – take the tour yourself to see whether you can guess the locations correctly.

Greeted at Shichahai subway station by Brian Bergey, Lost Plate's co-founder, resident beer-lover, and seasoned

PHOTO COURTESY OF LOST PLATE

guide, we took a short walk through the hutongs, reaching our first stop – one that many of you have probably frequented and is credited as one of, if not the first, craft brewery in Beijing. Proud of its locally sourced recipes, the first brew we tried from a flight of four proved extremely drinkable and infused with Sichuan peppercorns and honey from an apiary located near the Great Wall. The flight also included another of my favorites, a beer that features Chinese cinnamon, Chinese rock candy, local malted barley, and local Qingdao flower hops from Xinjiang and Gansu.

Having failed to rinse the guides of all their boozy knowledge, but succeeding in rendering our glasses dry, it was time to travel to the second location using Lost Plate's exclusive tuk tuk (complete with cooler and local roadies). The second venue, a decently sized taphouse in the heart of some of Beijing's liveliest hutongs, provided us with a flight of six of their in-house brewed beers and was accompanied by a bite of everyone's favorite street eat, *jianbing*. By this point, we couldn't be sure if our senses

were acting up but we could have sworn that there were notes of baijiu in the bean sauce.

After one last joy ride, we were transferred to our final destination, where we had four of this venue's most popular summer brews: German-style Kölsch; a dry-hopped and funky sour saison; a malty and biscuity American-style IPA; and a classic Seeing Double IPA (OK, you probably know where we are now), universally loved for its zesty flavors and notes of tropical fruits – a perfect wrap for the night.

The brewery tour sets off every Monday (7pm), Thursday (5pm), and Saturday (3pm), and has a maximum yield of 10 people so that the guides can dedicate their time to answering all of your curious sud-related questions. RMB 450 (USD 67) per person will get you over four pints of beer in total at three (or sometimes even four) breweries, a local Beijing snack, a souvenir pint glass, tuk tuk transportation, a better understanding of local brews, and a guaranteed tipsy and fun experience. To book, visit [lostplate.com](http://lostplate.com) or email [info@lostplate.com](mailto:info@lostplate.com).





# SHAKE IT UP IN SHANGHAI

## Our 5 Favorite Pearl City Cocktail Bars

By Kyle Mullin

Think of Beijing and Shanghai not as rival cities, but as a pair of highly recommended cocktails placed before you on the bar. Beijing is a dirty martini that's potent, fun, and gives you a rough-and-tumble buzz. Meanwhile, Shanghai is a pricier item that goes down smoother, leaving you feeling refreshed and refined.

Both locales boast robust cocktail scenes, with Beijing's seeming to have more new openings than the bubbles found in a spritz drink. Yet, Shanghai's pool seems more aged and established, at least according to nearly everyone we've spoken to in the capital's lounges and speakeasies (the spiel usually going something like: "This is great, but have you tried x bar in Shanghai?"). Decide for yourself the next time you're in the Pearl City by trying our top five favorite Shanghai cocktail joints.

### Union Trading Company

When asked for Shanghai recommendations, many in-the-know cocktail aficionados start with this award-winner (pictured above). And there's little wonder why, with owner (and former Houston resident) Yao Lu having outfitted this quintessentially Americana bar with a range of cocktails aged in charred oak barrels.

The benefits of that aging are obvious – deeply rich, distinctively smoky flavors for cocktails like the Dead Man's Gun (made with heated single malt, blended Scotch, honey, and a few bitters and spices) and the El Bandito (made with Reposado Tequila, Oloroso sherry, apricot brandy, and orange bitters). These

barrel-aged options are pretty pricey at RMB 150, but they are also guaranteed to be 150ml each and, considering their expert prep, are well worth splashing out on. Other options include a range of seasonal specials priced in the more reasonable RMB 80-95 range.

The menu is rounded out with upscale pub grub like truffle fries, chicken wings, and their eponymous burger. What left us unanimously praising Union, however, was its drink menu and its fun, low-key, Old West atmosphere.

*64 Fengyang Lu, Xuhui District (021 6418 3077)*

徐汇区汾阳路64号

### Sober Society (third floor of Sober Company)

Sober Society made some serious noise when it opened in early 2017, which couldn't be more starkly juxtaposed to its cozy, intimate, and softly lit ambiance. While those features make it perfect for a date, it can't quite accommodate the demand of thirsty throngs (during our visit the line ran out the doorway).

That enthused response arguably makes Sober Society an even bigger winner than owner Shingo Gokan's older, smaller, but nonetheless still popular Speaklow bar. Chalk Sober's success up to creative cocktails like the RMB 120 Second Flush, made with distinctive ingredients like Darjeeling tea, elderflower, rose water, grapefruit, and soda for a refreshingly bubbly and light concoction.

No cocktail on Sober's specialty menu is below RMB 100, with

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE VENUES

most falling in the RMB 100-130 range, putting it on the costly side. One is even RMB 180, a price that'll have some patrons in need of a seat and a glass of ice water, but more reasonable once you know that it features high-quality Yamazaki whisky and fine-grained wasanbon sugar.

99 Yandang Lu, Huangpu District (021 5309 8261)

黄浦区雁荡路99号

### Above the Globe

Every watering hole has at least one bar stool bard. You know the type: an extroverted patron wowing his pals with jokes and monologue-worthy tall tales. However, the relatively new Above the Globe (its figurative curtain went up in February) has an ambiance truly worthy of great performers, thanks to the Shakespearean characters etched onto the walls and the Old English Cathedral-style arches behind the bar.

Owner Eddy Yang, proprietor of the recently closed but soon to be relocated Tailor Bar, has ensured that fans of that older venue will be all the more entertained by Globe thanks to its fun, theater-themed cocktails.

Those drinks are divided into three sections. First up: tragedy. Think aptly bitter, potent concoctions like the RMB 100, coffee, vanilla, and Remy VSOP cognac-laden Sleep No More. The there's the comedy section with fruitier, more palatable drinks like the RMB 110 A Midsummer Night's Dream, made with Botanist Gin, white and sparkling wines, passion fruit syrup, and lemon juice. Finally, we have the history section, which has appropriately aged offerings like the French 75, made using either cognac or gin, simple lemon juice, and champagne, and priced at a historically high RMB 210. And while cash-starved bit players won't be able to afford a drink at the Globe, this bar is particularly well suited for established stars with a taste for the finer things.

7/F, 1013 Beijing Xilu, Jing'an District (173 1736 9152)

静安区北京西路1013号7楼



LIQUID LAUNDRY



BOTANIST

### Liquid Laundry

The homemade craft brews and delectable grub have helped make this gastropub hugely popular, which comes as no surprise considering owner Kelly Lee's prior experience at Boxing Cat, Sproutworks, Cantina Agave, and other Shanghai mainstays. But the cocktails at Liquid Laundry have also earned their own renown.

Standouts include the RMB 80 Revolver, which features French press-infused bourbon, amaro, bitters, and the much lighter Dr. Lee's Tonic, made with Tanqueray gin, celery shrub, lime, sea salt, and tonic.

K. Wah Centre, 2/F, 1028 Huaihai Zhonglu, Xuhui District (6445 9589)

徐汇区淮海中路1028号 嘉华坊2楼

### Botanist

True to its name, this bar carefully sources locally grown organic herbs and other key ingredients before storing them on site in a "vertical self-sustaining herb wall" to help make Botanist's cocktails as fresh as possible. The owners' prior cocktail lounge, the now defunct Flask, was fancier but this newer establishment has an airy, open concept, and the added bonus of street-facing seating.

They decided to forgo quirky drink names and instead just number the menu items, coinciding nicely with the laboratory themed decor. Some of the cocktails are floral in both aroma and appearance, thanks to the colorful petals dropped inside, the aforementioned herbs, and sometimes even bell peppers or other fruits and veggies that are hollowed out so the boozy mixes can be poured inside.

17-2 Xiangyang Beilu, Jing'an District (6433 0538)

静安区襄阳北路17-2号

Introducing the people who matter

# MEET

DAVE DANIEL // CHUI WAN // DANZEL FOO // TERRY TOWNSHEND



## **KAMASI WASHINGTON**

**Sep 22-23 - Thirty-six-year-old Los Angeleno saxophonist Kamasi Washington made a name for himself by playing on Kendrick Lamar's landmark 2015 hip-hop album *To Pimp a Butterfly*, before releasing a sprawling, critically acclaimed triple album called *The Epic* that same year. The *New York Times* describes him as one of today's few jazz musicians to play concert halls, rather than smaller clubs, before adding that attendees at his gigs "do something that people at jazz concerts seldom do anymore: They dance." RMB 500-600. 7.30pm. Blue Note Beijing**

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRAINFEDDER



## DAVE DANIEL

### ROCK ON RADIO FOUNDER

By Kyle Mullin

**D**ave Daniel is trying to get China's music buffs and bands on the same wavelength, in every sense of the word. The Beijing-based Australian expat operates four Internet radio stations: Rock On Radio, which airs music from mainstream musicians and expat acts like Stevie Mac & The Mac Daddies and Ember Swift; Meowing Tiger Radio for Chinese chart-toppers like Jane Zhang (张靓颖), TFBoys (加油男孩), and (hopefully) numerous Mandarin-speaking indie acts before too long; a new station called The Beat with dance, trance, and dub remixes; and another new station in cooperation with artist management firm MusicDish\*China called Rock On Radio MusicDish.

Chief among Daniel's goals for the network: providing a promotional platform on the Rock on Radio station for expat bands, be they in Beijing, across China, or around the world. He also wants to coordinate with musicians and promoters to live stream gigs or record them for broadcasting. His first such attempt will be at Yue Space on September 14 during a screening of the Subtrainian music mockumentary and the subsequent live sets by various Beijing bands.

Below, Daniel shares a playlist of some of the acts you can expect to rock out to via Rock On Radio.

#### **Stevie Mac & The Mac Daddies, "Loves Warp Speed"**

If the right people hear this song, Stevie Mac & The Mac Daddies could get a record contract. They've got this big-band sound, with this funk attitude, which helps them

occupy a unique space. It reminds me of Jamiroquai – he was into cosmic lyrics, just like Stevie is. That doesn't exist much in music these days.

#### **Ember Swift, "Sleep"**

This song, off her latest album *Sticks and Stones*, has a great plot twist in the lyrics, especially if you're listening and you don't know the title. At first I thought she was singing about breaking up with her husband (ha!), but then the big reveal in the chorus really knocks you out. That's a hallmark of great songwriting.

#### **Paco Marconi, "Moving to Mars"**

Paco is a Peruvian fellow in Shanghai with true pop artist chops. This song is very lighthearted and pretty.

#### **Chen Yu Hua, "Equally Heaven"**

We play him on our Chinese station. This song is great because he sampled the theme music of the old *Journey to the West* TV series that so many Chinese people grew up watching. And his lyrics here are about the mythology of the Monkey King. It's a very modern, hip-hop twist on an old story.

*Listen to Daniel's Internet radio network via its mini app by searching Rock on Radio on WeChat. You can also visit his website, [www.rockonradio.info](http://www.rockonradio.info), or search for Rock On Radio on Facebook or [www.tunein.com](http://www.tunein.com). This is a nonprofit operation, so community support via the mini app's donation page is appreciated.*

# CHUI WAN GO WEIRD

**PSYCH ROCKERS PARTNER WITH ALL-STAR PRODUCER,  
BUT STUBBORNLY REFUSE TO SELL OUT**

By Kyle Mullin



For many musicians, the chance to work with a hotshot producer might tempt them to pine for superstardom and a lunge toward the mainstream. Thankfully, Chui Wan isn't that kind of band. Yes, the members of the Beijing-based psych troupe (a staple of local label Maybe Mars' roster) didn't let their collaboration with Rusty Santos go to their heads, even though the producer has helmed hits for indie titans like Animal Collective and Grizzly Bear. Instead, Santos helped Chui Wan go ever weirder on their latest LP, *The Landscape the Tropics Never Had*, released via Maybe Mars. Below, vocalist Yan Yulong and lead guitarist Liu Xinyu tell us more about what their latest recording experience was like.

**Tell us what it was like working with Rusty Santos on this album.**

**Yan Yulong:** Rusty has a wealth of experience and knows all about many different styles of music. His methods in the studio helped make complex operations simple and efficient. Even as a New Yorker, he has a deep understanding of Asian culture, which is rare.

We finished all the work in 10 days and then spent several days together in Beijing. The whole process was very enjoyable and we've kept in touch with him since.

**Liu Xinyu:** Rusty's homepage lists all the albums he has produced or worked on, and most of them are among my list of favorites. I also like how he used YouTube throughout the process to recommend music to us, and show us examples of other songs as a way to convey ideas. It was a very smooth and relaxed way of working.

**What recent events in your life affected the writing and recording of this album the most?**

**YY:** One major thing was the closing of D-22's successor, XP, in 2015. The musicians and friends that worked and played there lost a foothold and it more or less changed everyone's life. But even after that, we all kept making music. Sometimes there is no suitable venue for underground performances. In between performances, our friends would often gather to chat and drink, a pastime that inspired many of the lyrics on the title track.

**And what inspired the song "One Eye Closed"?**

**YY:** We had numerous muses for this song – drawing on the minimalistic, experimental styles of avant-garde composers Michael Gordon and Arthur Russell. The lyrics are about people experiencing



communication problems and turning a blind eye to it.

**Can you tell us where the album's cover art came from?**

**YY:** It's based on a picture called "Desert," by acclaimed Chinese artist named Li Gang. Rusty saw Li's exhibition this past November and absolutely loved it. It depicts the intense desolation of the desert with discarded everyday items and appliances. That notion very much fit the tone of our new album. So we contacted Li and asked if we could use his work for our album cover. He quickly agreed to it, and it made for a very happy collaboration.

*Chui Wan's new LP The Landscape the Tropics Never Had was released on September 1 and is available on Maybe Mars' Bandcamp. The band will perform at Yugong Yishan on October 7 as part of the Maybe Mars 10th Anniversary Showcase.*



# A DRINK WITH DANZEL FOO

SINGAPOREAN, BEIJINGER-WANNABE, AND ASSISTANT PRESIDENT  
OF BEIJING CAPITAL GRAND

**A** Drink With is a regular column in which we ask Beijing personalities to tell us about their drinking habits and preferences. This issue, we talk to Danzel Foo, a Singaporean, and assistant president of Beijing Capital Grand (Capital Outlets), who has experienced Beijing in the hot and cold ways.

**Could you tell us a bit about yourself, what brought you here and what that was like?**

A true blue Singaporean, I landed here in 2007 during a grey and cold winter now almost 10 years ago! Desire and curiosity brought me here, and my dad always encouraged me to return back to my “roots” to gain a better understanding of our ancestors. However, coming straight from year-round 28-34 degree temperatures, I underestimated Beijing winter and was far too underdressed. Upon my arrival, I remember staring out the car window for more than an hour, watching rows and rows of snow-covered trees, and white and gray buildings (often seen in Korean drama series back home). One of my earliest life-changing experiences here was witnessing the “not-to-miss” 2008 Olympics in Beijing, which helped solidify it as the first Chinese city in my mind, and why I came back this February after living and working in Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Shanghai for the past six years.

**How old were you when you first started drinking?**

I started at the age of five, unofficially – it was sabotage when my fifth uncle handed me a glass of some yellow-colored drink that was meant to be a “special-tasting pineapple juice.” As a five-year-old child, I liked all fizzy drinks, so I took it without hesitation, but it was actually pineapple-flavored beer (back home in Singapore, we often drink beer with pineapple, strawberry, and apple flavors). It tasted weird, but I still managed to finish it. Officially, I started drinking at the age of 13 during “functions” (closed-door ticketed parties with snacks, pop music, disco lights).

**What’s your favorite drink? Has your favorite drink changed over time?**

Chile Casa Lapostolle Clos Apalta red wines for now ... gin and vodka in my 20s, bourbon and whisky in my 30s, and, last but not least, white and red wines in my 40s. The new cycle is around the corner. What’s next?

**What’s your golden rule of drinking?**

Not to eat too much and to avoid oily food. I also learnt from my Chinese colleagues to drink yogurt before drinking and to be happy throughout the session.

**What’s your most outrageous drinking experience?**

Waking up the next day to discover myself in a public telephone booth or holding onto the toilet in my bathroom. But again that was when I was in my 20s. I am a sober drinker most of the time.

**What’s your idea of a good night out?**

Bottles of great red wine, fun companions, exciting conversations, a “leave us alone” surrounding (unless service is needed), as well as relinquishing cell phones after first few group photos are taken at the start.

**Where’s your favorite place to go drinking?**

Post Mountain (Art Space), and Glen Classic. Post Mountain is best for multi-faceted entertainment experiences – from exhibitions to live music to film and art, and ending with some mouthwatering snacks and bottles of chilled wine. The comfortable soft leather sofas and oversized armchairs at the bar are partial draws to Glen Classic. The tailor-made advice from the barman on your likes or dislikes is also something to game for. At Nanluogu Xiang, I’ve discovered a place Xiao Xin’s Café to order a piece of creamy cheesecake coupled with a bottle of Qingdao beer. It can be yummy under a hot sun. *Tracy Wang*



# TERRY TOWNSHEND

## BIRDING BEIJING FOUNDER TELLS US WHY AUTUMN IS THE PERFECT SEASON TO SPOT OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS IN THE CAPITAL

By Kyle Mullin

From the moment Terry Townshend laid eyes on the Ibisbill – gazing at its striking gray, black, and white feathers, along with its bright, downward-curved bill – he knew that he had made a special discovery, but not only because the bird is so rarely sighted. No, what made the moment all the more memorable was that he had spotted the bird on the outskirts of Beijing, a locale so notorious for its smog, traffic, and sprawling concrete that it would be the last place many of us might think of when conjuring ideas of an idyllic habitat.

Yet that 2011 trip to the outlying Huairou District helped Townshend realize Beijing could be a birdwatching haven. Since then, the British environmentalist has passionately espoused such in interviews for the *New York Times* and the BBC. Townshend, a British expat who arrived in Beijing in 2010 as the director of an environmental NGO, not only promotes this rarely positive Beijing environmental story in the media – he also tirelessly catalogs sightings on his *Birding Beijing* website, along with detailing numerous tips about how and where Beijingers can begin their own birdwatching expeditions.

“I was surprised to learn that there are over 480 species of bird in Beijing. But other people are even more surprised to hear that that total beats London, Paris, Washington DC, and numerous other major cities,” Townshend says during a recent interview.

When asked for reasons why the capital is such a strong destination for our feathered friends, Townshend gives a relatively simple explanation: millions of birds dwell in the rural surroundings of Siberia and China’s northeast, and several of them pass through Beijing while migrating to water climes south.

And that’s why Townshend is especially pleased to speak with *the Beijinger* for our Sep/Oct issue – because these autumn migratory months are some of the very best

of the year to go birdwatching in the capital. His favorite haunt is Lingshan Mountain, located on the outskirts of west Beijing. Indeed, at over 2,300 meters, its summit is the highest point in the capital’s municipality, making it a place where “you can see some birds that are typical of the Tibetan plateau.”

More convenient alternatives include the Olympic Forest Park, the Beijing Botanical Garden, and Yuyuantan Park. Townshend says: “Early morning is the best time to go, because [the birds are] hungry and they’re out, though early evening can also be good.”

Anyone interested in getting a glimpse of what Beijing’s skies have to offer should check out Townshend’s website ([www.birdingbeijing.com](http://www.birdingbeijing.com)), which has submenus like “A Birder’s Guide to Beijing” and “A Birder’s Guide to the Great Wall.” He also recommends that newbies look into joining the Beijing Birdwatching society (which can be reached via email at [beijingbws@yahoo.com.cn](mailto:beijingbws@yahoo.com.cn), or by phone at 134 3638 0443).

That society has over 400 members, which is only a fraction of its counterparts’ memberships in Western countries. But Townshend is heartened both by how the Beijing group is growing – up from 300 to the current 400 total in a span of 18 months – and especially by the number of young people who are involved.

“It amazes me how they see birdwatching as a cool thing. When I was young that was very much not the case,” he says with a chuckle, before speculating on one reason why. “Their parents came through the Chinese education system. They missed out on that connection with nature because the state curriculum taught so little about biodiversity. It looks like these parents want their children to have that connection, so the demand is growing, the enthusiasm is there, and that’s very encouraging.”

# OLD CHINA HAND



*THE RARE IBISBILL THAT INSPIRED TOWNSHEND TO PROMOTE BEIJING AS A BIRDWATCHING HAVEN*



*BIRDING BEIJING FOUNDER TERRY TOWNSHEND*



*THE YEYAHU TOWER, FROM WHICH TOWNSHEND HAS SPOTTED MANY OF BEIJING'S BIRDS*

# TESTINI TIMES

by Andrew Killeen

When it comes to getting around Beijing, there's nothing quicker and more convenient than a car – except for every other form of transport ever invented, up to and including pogo sticks and ostrich riding.

Still, if you want to be able to spend hours at a time sitting in a traffic jam because two Porsches have touched wing mirrors and are waiting for a responsible adult to come and sort the situation out, then you're going to need to pass a test.

When we first discovered this, our outraged indignation knew no bounds. You mean to say that even though we hold a British driving license, issued personally by Her Majesty the Queen, we're not considered good enough to drive in Beijing? The land that reverse parallel parking forgot?

Furthermore, we're not permitted to get into a car and show that we can drive. We have to pass a "Theory" test. As anyone who's driven on Beijing roads knows, Theory and Practice in the Chinese highway code are not only divorced, they've been through an acrimonious custody battle which left Practice with the house and kids while Theory is drinking itself to sleep on a friend's sofa.

In a bid to solve this problem, we have developed the Real Chinese Driving Test, which we submit to the authorities for their consideration.

**1. How do you indicate your intention to pull out into traffic?**

- a) Using the car's indicator lights
- b) With a hand signal
- c) By pulling out into traffic

**2. Oh yes, those flashing lights on the side of the car. What are they for, anyway?**

- a) To show other vehicles which way you're turning

- b) To frighten away evil spirits
- c) What flashing lights?

**3. When both sets of indicator lights are flashing at once, this means:**

- a) I have stopped in an emergency
- b) My friend is following me and can't remember which car is mine
- c) I'm playing the game where I drive very slowly up the middle of the road, and you have to guess whether I'm about to turn left, turn right, speed up or suddenly stop

**4. What about those little mirrors on either side of the car, what are they for, then?**

- a) Checking whether a bike is approaching on the inside before I turn
- b) Checking my reflection when I get out of the car
- c) Feng shui

**5. Bicycle lanes are for the exclusive use of:**

- a) Bicycles
- b) Bicycles, tuk-tuks, and little old men pedaling trikes heaped with teetering piles of cardboard
- c) Sports utility vehicles

**6. What is the proper use of a car horn?**

- a) To warn other vehicles of your approach
- b) To express your annoyance when other vehicles swerve in front of you
- c) To solve the problem of Beijing's congested roads by beeping loud and long in traffic jams

**7. Using a mobile phone while driving is:**

- a) Dangerous and stupid
- b) Inadvisable
- c) Compulsory

**8. Which vehicles do not need to stop at red lights?**

- a) Emergency vehicles
- b) Those who are turning right, or in a bit of a hurry
- c) Any vehicle which is black, German-made, and costs in excess of RMB 500,000

**How did you score?**

Mostly (a)s – You're a careful, considerate, responsible driver. You stand about as much chance on the streets of Beijing as a kitten in a tank full of hagfish.

Mostly (b)s – You are learning, young apprentice. But you still have far to go.

Mostly (c)s – Congratulations, you're a true Beijing *shifu*! Have you considered a career as a taxi driver? All you need is a 60-a-day smoking habit, someone else's license on your dashboard, and a mysterious crate in your trunk so there's no room for your passengers' luggage.



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