

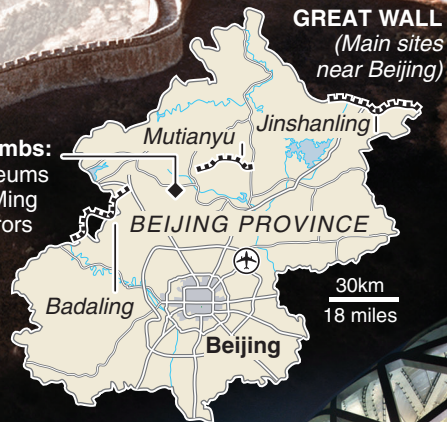
# Beijing city guide

The capital of China for almost 800 years, Beijing has been transformed in the last two decades from an austere Communist city into a fast-growing, bustling metropolis of 17 million people

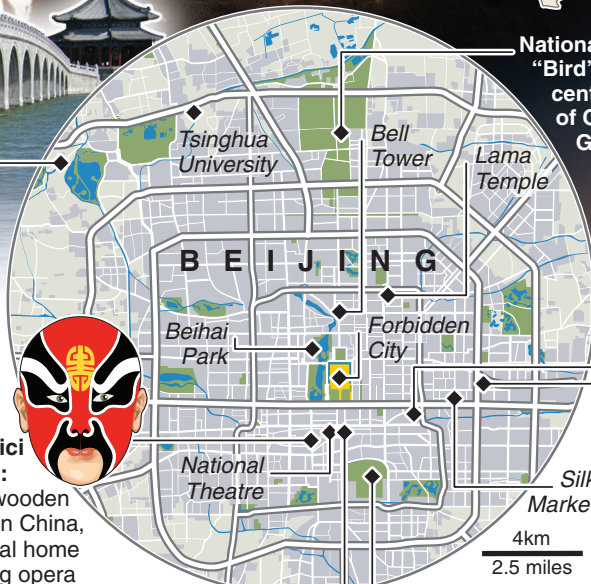
**Forbidden City:** World's largest palace complex, ceremonial and political centre of Chinese government for almost five centuries

**Ming tombs:** Mausoleums of 13 Ming emperors

**GREAT WALL**  
(Main sites near Beijing)



**National Stadium:** "Bird's Nest" is centrepiece of Olympic Games



**Summer Palace:** Imperial garden retreat declared World Heritage Site due to "outstanding expression of creative art of Chinese landscape garden design"

**Zhengyi Theatre:** Oldest wooden theatre in China, traditional home of Beijing opera

**Tiananmen Square:** World's largest open-urban square and site of key events in Chinese history. Buildings include mausoleum of **Mao Zedong** and **Great Hall of the People**

**Temple of Heaven:** Complex of Taoist buildings, including **Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests** (left), used by emperors of Ming and Qing dynasties

**Ancient Observatory:** Built in 15th century for astrological predictions and seafaring navigation, exhibits Jesuit-designed, Chinese-decorated instruments

**National Grand Theatre:** Designed by French architect **Paul Andreu**, egg-shaped dome surrounded by lake is Beijing's newest opera house

**CCTV building:** Chinese Central Television HQ, under construction in heart of emerging business district, is set to dominate new Beijing skyline

