CHINA
Great Wall of China Trek

Duration: 11 days / 10 nights

Trip Grade: Moderate

Dates:

8 – 18 Apr 2010 👪 **7 – 17 Apr 2011** 👪
23 Sep – 3 Oct 2010 **22 Sep – 2 Oct 2011**
14 – 24 Oct 2010 🅥 **13 – 23 Oct 2011** 🅥

Payment Options:

Payment Options:	2010	2011
Self Payment Registration Fee	£299	£299
Trip Cost	£1180	£1200
Fundraising Registration Fee	£299	£299
Min. Fundraising Target	£2950	£3000

Stretching 6000km in a snaking line across China, the Great Wall was begun in the 5th Century BC. As it snakes across the mountains it conjures up a sense of history which is difficult to grasp until you have had the opportunity to experience it.

Our trek is very varied, as we trek through woodland and terraced farmland, and follow the contours of the beautiful hills and mountains in remote areas north of Beijing. We walk on old sections of the Great Wall, as well as restored sections with smooth flagstones and lots of steps!

This challenge is physically demanding and offers fabulous scenery and a fascinating insight into a rich culture and history.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart London for Beijing

Day 2: Beijing

Arrive Beijing. We transfer to our city hotel, where we can freshen up and relax! There will be a full trip briefing in the evening

Day 3: Beijing – Huangyaguan

We transfer this morning from the busy streets of Beijing, driving northwest into the hills above Huangyaguan (3.5-4.5 hours). Huangyaguan is situated in a beautiful valley in the heart of the Yanshan Mountains. After a scenic drive through a landscape of hills and lakes, we arrive at our village and see the Great Wall for the first time, as it snakes along the ridgeline of the mountains. After a good traditional lunch we start our trek! The Wall is well renovated here and it disappears into the horizon in both directions. After some steep step sections, which give us a good inkling of what lies ahead, we walk predominantly downhill until we reach the small town of Huangyaguan. Here the wall crosses the road that leads to our nearby accommodation. **Trek approx 2 – 3 hours**

Day 4: Huangyaguan – Mountain Village

Our day's walk begins where we left the Wall yesterday, and we head up the steep renovated steps towards what appears to be a sheer cliff face. This is where we encounter 'Heaven's Ladder', a steep climb of over 200 steps leading us up the cliff face. There are fabulous views from the top, and once we have caught our breath the path continues gradually on steep tracks through forest, up to the top of the ridge. Once again we join the old Wall, and follow it along the contours of the mountain until we clamber down into the valley below. We bed down in the houses of a local village, a real cultural experience. **Trek approx 7 hours**

Day 5: Mountain Village – Jinshanlin

Waving goodbye to our hospitable hosts, we head up through the farming terraces immediately behind the village. The path is steep, and the terraces soon give way to rocky hillsides scattered with scrub. Eventually we re-join the Wall, which is un-restored and crumbling so we follow a path which takes us alongside it, with fabulous views along the ridgeline to the day's highest point. We then drop down the hillside and make our way on winding tracks through trees back into the valley, where farmers grow maize, and walnut and fruit trees. Back at the village, we walk along the village road, enjoying the scenes of rural life, until we reach the main road and our waiting transport. Our drive through the mountains to Jinshanlin (3-4 hours) is very scenic. **Trek approx 4 – 5 hours**

Day 6: Gubeiko – Jinshanlin

A quick 20-minute hop in the bus takes us to our start point just outside the village of Gubeiko. We walk through the village and farmland until our path takes us alongside an un-restored yet well-preserved section of the Wall. This part appears to be of almost brick-like construction and dates back to the Qing Dynasty, the last dynasty to rule over this vast land. We follow a track down into the valley in order to skirt a Chinese military post and follow dirt paths through trees and undergrowth before rejoining the Wall. There are some steep sections and we help each other out if need be. Stunning views of the Great Wall snaking along the hilltops keep us going whenever we find it tough! The final stretch to Jinshanlin is on restored Wall with lots of steps. A short walk through the village and small shops takes us to our simple accommodation. **Trek approx 7 – 8 hours**

Day 7: Jinshanlin – Simatei

Today's stunning walk on this largely restored section of the Wall takes us from Jinshanlin to Simatei. Starting where we left off yesterday, we head up the carefully restored steps which take us into the mountains one final time. There are a few sections on older bricks and some dirt tracks, but for most of today we walk on good flagstones. The scenery is superb with rolling purple hills fading into the distance. We leave the Great Wall at Simatei, enjoying the view as it clings precariously to the rock face opposite, dotted with many watchtowers; classic 'scales on a dragon's back' scenery. We cross a pedestrian bridge and finish the day with the opportunity to zip slide (approx 35 yuan) across the lake and then catch a small boat ride back across to our accommodation. If you prefer not to zip slide it is an easy 30 minute walk down. **Approx 6 hours trekking**

Day 8: Simatei – Mutianyu

Our day starts with a bus transfer (approx 3 hrs) from our hotel at Simatei to Mutianyu Great Wall. Our trek itself starts with a brief walk through a friendly village before we climb for 1-2 hours up the hillside, where we may see villagers gathering firewood. We can see the Wall high on the ridge ahead of us, and slowly wind our way up to it. Once more our efforts are rewarded by stunning views as the Wall disappears from view in both directions. We continue along the well-restored Wall flagstones, with some good sections of steps, before descending down to our hotel at Mutianyu. There is an opportunity to do some haggling in the markets before you reach the hotel, so carry some money with you for this! **Trek approx 4 – 5 hours**

Day 9: Mutianyu – Juyongguan

After a transfer (2-3 hrs), our final day's walk takes us on a circuit of the restored Wall at Juyongguan. The Wall undulates across the rolling spine of hills offering spectacular views of this area, where many warriors once fought. After some of the steepest steps we have encountered yet, our trek is over all too soon and we must leave the Wall and return to the twenty-first century. We load up the bus and transfer to Beijing, the nation's capital and home to over 13 million people. Our senses will be

unprepared as we enter Beijing and experience its frenetic energy, quite a contrast after the natural scenery and remote tranquillity of the past few days. After checking into our hotel, we have time to freshen up before the evening celebration meal. *(Dinner not included).* **Trek approx 4 hours**

Day 10: **Free day Beijing**

We take the opportunity to visit the fabulous Forbidden City and Tianenman Square. You are then free to do more sight-seeing, explore the local shops and markets or simply relax. *(Lunch and dinner not included)*

Day 11: Transfer to the airport for our flight to London – arrive same day

For details of our extension to see the incredible Terracotta Warriors in Xian (adds 4 extra days) please contact us

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

The tour cost includes flights, all transport, accommodation and food other than 3 meals. It also includes full trip support of experienced Discover Adventure leaders and medics; local guides, drivers and cooks (see Trip Support below).

A tour of the Forbidden City on your free day is also included.

As a general guide, items not included in the tour cost are your personal travel insurance, entry visa, airport departure tax, tips for local support crew, any extra meals and entry to other tourist sites you may wish to visit on your free day.

We recommend £150 - £200 for personal expenses. Most people will not spend this much. There is plenty of opportunity to buy souvenirs; this sum will not cover extreme souvenir shopping! We strongly recommend you carry a credit card in case of personal emergency.

FAMILY CHALLENGES

The departure dates marked are open to 14-18 year-olds provided they are accompanied by a parent/guardian. All other departures are restricted to adults (18+) as normal.

Child prices are as follows*:

Payment Options:	2010	2011
Self Payment Registration Fee	£299	£299
Trip Cost	£1050	£1070
Fundraising Registration Fee	£299	£299
Min. Fundraising Target	£1350	£1370

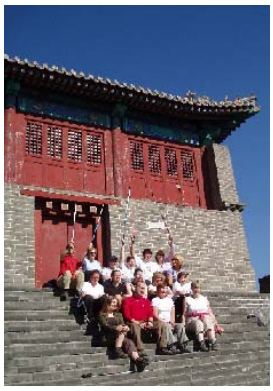
FLIGHT INFORMATION

Group flights leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline.

Connecting Flights

If you book flights to Heathrow or Gatwick, it is your responsibility to allow plenty of time to connect to the group flight and to cope with any flight schedule changes. Please be aware that the best deals allow little flexibility if you need to change them. We regret that we are unable to book connecting flights for you.



Transit Stops

When booking group flights we endeavour to find the best flights that match our itinerary. There are often no direct flights to our

destination, so do be prepared for transit stops: bring a good book or chat to your fellow trekkers! Airlines that do offer direct flights rarely offer competitive rates for groups. Please remember that the main purpose of our trips is to raise money for charity!

Flying Separately

If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost. You will be responsible for making your own arrangements for meeting the rest of the group, though we can advise you. We need to know if you do not require our group flight as early as possible; please complete the form in the information pack you'll be sent with your booking confirmation.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation on this trek ranges from good quality western-style hotels in Beijing to more basic mountain hotels. There is one night in farmers' houses, which provides a real insight into rural Chinese life. Please do not expect the same standards as you would in the UK!

FOOD

All food is included when trekking. The food is good, freshly-cooked and will give you plenty of energy for the long days of trekking. Meals are generally Chinese-style not western. In some areas fresh meat can be hard to come by.

Dietary Requirements

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we will be in very rural areas and among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Other Meals

Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally when we are in towns or cities and you are free to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit every budget.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

For most people, the main attraction of travelling to a different country is to see new sights and enjoy new experiences. Sometimes those new experiences can make life harder or more inconvenient than you may like, such as toilet hygiene or different food, or simply a different attitude to solving problems. This is all part of the challenge you are signing up for!

We are very privileged to live in a country with a high standard of living, and travelling exposes us to different challenges – all of which help broaden our horizons. We can guarantee that coming face-to-face with experiences outside your normal 'comfort zone' will help you bond with your fellow trekkers and provide you with plenty of things to laugh about! A sense of humour and sense of adventure are two of the most important things to bring with you!

PASSPORT & VISA

A valid ten-year passport is essential for travel in China and must be valid for at least 6 months after entry into China. A visa is essential for all nationalities, costing approx £35 at time of writing. We will provide you with more information about entry visas in the lead-up to your trip.

VACCINATIONS

We recommend the following vaccinations:

- Tetanus (essential)
- Hepatitis A
- Polio
- Yellow Fever (only if coming from infected area)

You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

TREKKING INFORMATION

We are always happy to talk through the trip in more detail with you if you are worried about your fitness at any stage.

FITNESS WARNING: DESIGNED TO BE CHALLENGING!

This trek is designed to be challenging for those of good health and fitness, and is achievable for most people provided they train well in advance. We will supply you with a thorough training guide when you have registered. Training for the challenge is all part of the preparation and requires commitment! Without it, you will find the trek less enjoyable – and we want you to have the time of your life!

Clothing & Equipment

We are travelling through remote mountains where we could be exposed to bad weather at any time. The table below gives you an idea of the climate, but be prepared for all weathers and temperatures. Weather conditions can change quickly in the mountains. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, as well as details on useful discounts you are entitled to as a Discover Adventure customer. We are always available if you need advice.

Weather

Min/Max temp °C & average monthly rainfall (Beijing)

April	7-21°C	17	**Sept**	14-26°C	58
May	13-27°C	35	**Oct**	6-20°C	16

Terrain

Walking is partly on flagstones of various conditions on the Wall, and partly on paths through woodland or farmland. At times it is rough and rocky underfoot, at other times it can be muddy. There are also many steps. If you are unsteady on your feet you will find trekking poles useful.

Trekking Distances:

You will trek approximately 80km on this trip overall. Because of the varied terrain and lack of accurate maps, it's impossible to give accurate daily distances. It's also much more useful when training to think about the hours you need to walk for!

TRAINING WEEKENDS: £99 SPECIAL OFFER!

Only when you book at the same time as registering for your main challenge

Discover Adventure Training Weekends in Snowdonia National Park are designed help you prepare for your challenge. Whether you use the weekend to gauge your fitness, get your training back on track, boost your confidence, get advice or meet other trekkers, you're bound to find it incredibly useful!

For dates and further information see our brochure or website.

TRIP SUPPORT

Discover Adventure Crew

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

All our leaders are from the UK or other English-speaking countries. Most work for us on an ad-hoc basis and have 'real' jobs in-between trips! We never send our leaders to the same destination for months on end – we want them to be as enthusiastic about your trip as you are.

Although our leaders are trained in expedition first-aid, they are accompanied by an expedition doctor or medic, who is there to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any incidents. They help the leaders to ensure the trip runs smoothly and encourage you when things get tough.

The number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but an average-sized group in China would be led by two leaders and a doctor. At Discover Adventure we pride ourselves on our high leader: trekker ratio and believe it leads to greater trip enjoyment as well as excellent trip safety.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, drivers and cooks, and porters where appropriate. Your local guide knows the local area well, and is a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Drivers, cooks and porters do not always speak English but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Tips for Local Crew

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! Your leader will give you an idea of appropriate guidelines. All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in this country is far below what you would spend on a normal night out.

Luggage

Your luggage is carried by vehicles from hotel to hotel. Vehicles will drop us off at the start of the trek and pick us up for any transfers. They also carry all food, water etc.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft sailing bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already.

You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

TRIP SAFETY

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with radios and emergency satellite phones, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. They always have access to our 24-hour emergency back-up in the UK. Our leaders are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary should local conditions dictate.

Pre-trip administration – such as compulsory medical questionnaires and travel insurance – is all done with your safety in mind.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Long before 'Responsible Tourism' became a recognised phrase, we designed and ran our trips to ensure they made minimum impact on the environment and a positive impact on the local communities we pass through. AITO, our Trade Association has recognised the work we do in this area and has awarded us 4 stars as a Responsible Tour Operator.

CARBON OFFSETTING

We actively encourage all our customers to offset any emissions connected with their trip. You can offset at any time in the lead-up to departure by visiting Climate Care via our website and making a donation to a worthwhile project supported by them. Alternatively, if you wish to take more practical action you can volunteer for a day with BTCV and work on an environmental project near to where you live. Work may include construction footpaths, dry stone walling, creating wildlife habitats or planting trees in your community. Make your volunteer pledge by going to www.btcv.org/dapledge

Please contact the Discover Adventure office with any queries using the contact details below.

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