

Beijing's essential international family resource

# beijingkids

July 2018





# WELCOME HOME!

## A fun view of your new community in the Jing

Beijing is undeniably large, with its whopping 16,411 sqkm of land area, the majority of it being rural. At times you might feel like your family is in a small bubble but believe us, there's more fun and life beyond your comfortable living space.

On the right page is a map of your new community, showing what's in and what's cool in the Jing! The first map shows central Beijing with neighborhood clusters from **Shuangjing** and the **Central Business District** (grids C5 to E6), **Sanlitun** and **Dongzhimen** expat hubs (C4-D4), **Liangmaqiao**, **Chaoyang Park**, and **Lido** areas (D1-E4), while the second map shows the breadth of the northeastern Chaoyang and Shunyi Districts, including the **Wangjing** neighborhood (F5-G6), **Laiguangying** (G4-H4), and much of **Shunyi** (G1-I4).

Here are several family-friendly places and major establishments that will help you make the most of your time in Beijing. See more updated directories on our website ([www.beijing-kids.com](http://www.beijing-kids.com)) and our sister brand, *the Beijinger* ([www.thebeijinger.com](http://www.thebeijinger.com)). Once more, welcome home!

### Residential Areas

#### CBD and Shuangjing

- 1 Blue Castle Apartments – E5  
Xidawang Lu
- 2 Central Park – D5  
Guandongdian
- 3 Fuli City – D6  
55 Dongsanhuan Lu
- 4 Gemdale International Garden – E5  
91 Jiangou Lu
- 5 Landgent International Apartments – D6  
76 Baizhuan Nanlu
- 6 Pingod Apartments – D6  
32 Baizhuan Lu

#### Sanlitun

- 7 Lianbao Garden – C4  
Gongrentiyuchang Beilu, Xingfuyuan Xili
- 8 Seasons Park International Apartments – C4  
Chunxiu Lu
- 9 Tayuan Diplomatic Residence Compound – C4  
Xindong Lu

#### Chaoyang Park and Liangmaqiao

- 10 Green Lake – D4  
Yaojiayuan Lu
- 11 Palm Springs – D5  
8 Chaoyang Gongyuan Nanlu
- 12 Park Avenue – E5  
West Gate: Tianshuiyuan Dongjie

#### Wangjing and Lido

- 13 Chateau Regency – E5  
2 Jiangtai Lu
- 14 Upper East Side – G6  
6 Dongsanhuan Beilu
- 15 Wangjing Garden – G5  
Lize Zhongjie

#### Laiguangying

- 16 Beijing Riviera – H4  
1 Xiangjiang Beilu
- 17 Grand Hills – H4  
Xiangjiang Beilu
- 18 Quanfa Gardens – G4  
Xiangjiang Beilu

#### Shunyi

- 19 Beijing Capital Paradise – H3  
Off Jingshun Lu
- 20 Yosemite Villas – G2  
4 Yuyang Lu, Houshayu

### Food and Beverage

- 21 Flo Prestige – D4  
Offers French cuisine and handmade canapes (6595 5135)
- 22 Georgia's Feast – C4  
Serves Georgian delicacies (8448 6886)
- 23 Hatchery – B5  
Beijing's first culinary incubator. (8950 8065)
- 24 Kimo – G6  
(8471 5788)
- 25 The Orchard – G3  
(6433 6270)
- 26 Pie Squared – H4  
Detroit-style deep dish square pizza in Shunyi. (8430 8859)
- 27 Q Mex Bar & Grill – D5  
Casual-themed Mexican cantina (6585 3828)
- 28 Ramo Restaurant & Bar – E2  
Well-made pizzas, pasta, and salads. (6436 1299)
- 29 Tiago – E2  
Classic Italian restaurant dishes. (6438 8772)
- 30 Tiger Pancake House – D6  
American-style pancake restaurant in Beijing. (6770 5882)
- 31 Tribe Organic – E2  
Offers organic, healthy fare at mid-range prices. (8587 1899)
- 32 Tube Station – E2  
American-style pizza joint. (8322 4868)

### Shopping

- 33 Cathay View Plaza – H4  
Xiangjiang Lu
- 34 China World Shopping Mall – D5  
1 Jianguomenwai Dajie
- 35 IKEA – G6  
1 Taiyang Gonglu
- 36 Indigo Mall – E2  
18 Jiuxianqiao Lu
- 37 Kerry Center – D5  
3/F Beijing Kerry Center, North Tower 1 Guanghua Lu
- 38 Lucky Street – D4  
1 Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu
- 39 Parkview Green – C5  
9 Dongdaqiao Lu
- 40 Pinnacle Plaza – H3  
99 Yuxiang Lu, Tianzhu
- 41 The Place – C5  
A9 Guanghua Lu
- 42 Beijing Scitech Premium Outlets Mall – G4  
28 Xiangjiang Beilu
- 43 Shine Hills Mall – H2  
9 Antai Dajie
- 44 Si'de Park – E2  
9 Jiangtai Xilu
- 45 Solana Lifestyle Shopping Park – D4  
6 Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu
- 46 Space3 – D6  
No. 20 East Third Ring Middle Road
- 47 Taikoo Li – D4  
Sanlitun, Gongren Tiychang North Road
- 48 Viva Mall (Fuli Plaza) – D6  
Northeast corner of Shuangjing Qiao
- 49 Wangjing Soho – G5  
1 Futong East Street

### Health Services

- 50 Beijing Aier-Intech Eye Hospital – D6  
On-site shop sells frames and lenses. (6773 2700)
- 51 B Active Fitness – B5  
24-hour gym with multiple locations in the city. (5900 4748)
- 52 Base Fit – D6  
Fitness center focusing on all aspects of physical health. (5727 6060)
- 53 Beijing United Family Hospital – G6  
2 Jiangtai Lu. (5927 7000, ER: 5927 7120)
- 54 Blow + Bar Shunyi – H3  
Hip Singapore salon offering grooming with drinks served alongside usual services. (5136 5432)
- 55 IDC Dental – E2  
A multi-specialty dental clinic providing personalized care. 2/F Richmond Park Clubhouse, Fangyuan Nanli (6538 8111)
- 56 Ms. Uptown  
Female-only gym with varied fitness exercise classes. B/1 151, Bldg A, Galaxy Soho. (186 1189 4423)
- 57 Oasis International Hospital – G6  
9 Jiuxianqiao Beilu. (400 UR OASIS [876 2747])

### Education

- 58 Beijing City International School (BCIS) – D6  
77 Baizhuan Nan Er Lu. (8771 7171, admissions@bcis.cn)
- 59 Beijing International Bilingual Academy (BIBA) – H2  
No 1. Yumin Lu Houshayu. (8041 0390, info@bibachina.org)
- 60 Beijing No. 55 HS (Int'l Students Section) – C4  
12 Xinzhong Jie. (6416 9531, bj55iss@bj55.cn)
- 61 Beijing World Youth Academy (BWYA) – G6  
18 Huajiaodi Beili. (6470 6336, admissions@ibwya.net)
- 62 The British School of Beijing (BSB), Sanlitun – D4  
5 Xilujie, Sanlitun Road. (8532 3088, sltadmissions@bsbsanlitun.com)
- 63 The British School of Beijing (BSB), Shunyi – G3  
South Side, No.9, Anhua Street, Tianzhu Development Zone. (8047 3558, admissions@bsbsunyi.com)
- 64 Canadian International School of Beijing (CISB) – D4  
38 Liangmaqiao Lu. (6465 7788, admissions@cisbeijing.com)

- 65 Daystar Academy – F3  
2 Shunbai Lu (5603 9446, admissions-DS@daystarchina.cn)
- 66 Dulwich College Beijing – I4  
Riviera Main Campus: 1, XiangjiangBeilu, Jingshun Lu. (8450 7676, admissions@dulwich-beijing.cn)
- 67 Harrow Beijing – G4  
Hegezhuang Campus: No.287 Hegezhuang Village, Cuigezhuang County. (6444 8900, admissions@harrowbeijing.cn)
- 68 House of Knowledge Schools and Kindergartens – G4  
Shunyi Campus: North gate of Quanfa compound, 18 Maquanying Road. (400 650 7777, admissions@hkschools.com)
- 69 The International Montessori School of Beijing – H4  
Bldg 8, 2 Xiangjiang Beilu. (6432 8228, admissions@msb.edu.cn)
- 70 International School of Beijing (ISB) – G3  
10 An Hua Street. (8149 2345 ext 1047, admission@isb.bj.edu.cn)
- 71 Keystone Academy – H1  
11 Anfu Jie, Houshayu. (8049 6008, admission@keystoneacademy.cn)
- 72 Western Academy of Beijing (WAB) – H5  
10 Laiguangying Donglu. (5986 5588, wabinfo@wab.edu)
- 73 Yew Chung International School of Beijing – E5  
East Gate of Honglingjin Park, 5 Houbalzhuang. (8583 3731, enquiry@bj.ycof.com)

### Hotels

- 74 East Beijing – E2  
A business hotel located in Indigo Mall. 22 Jiuxianqiao Lu (8426 0888)
- 75 Hotel Jen Beijing – D5  
Formerly Traders, the hotel is connected to China World Mall. 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie (6505 2277)
- 76 NUO Hotel Beijing – G6  
Boasts 438 guest rooms and suites, 7 restaurants and bars, and a collection of fitness event facilities. 2A Jiangtai Lu (5926 8888)
- 77 Kerry Hotel Beijing – D5  
This CBD-area Shangri-La property is noted for modern design and business-friendly amenities. 1 Guanghua Lu. (6561 8833)
- 78 Beijing Marriott Hotel Northeast – D3  
Located near the Liangmaqiao embassy district. 26A Xiaoyun Lu. (5927 8888)
- 79 Waldorf-Astoria Beijing  
5-15 Jinyu Hutong Wangfujing. (8520 8989)

### Sights and Other Places

- 80 798 Art District – H6  
The namesake of the 798 area and a factory space now houses occasional exhibits. 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu.
- 81 The Bookworm – D5  
Library and bookshop with a cafe. Gongti Beilu. (6586 9507)
- 82 CCTV Headquarters – D5  
Guanghua Qiao, Dongsanhuan Zhonglu
- 83 Chaoyang Park – D4  
1 Nongzhan Nanlu.
- 84 Gulou and Zhonglou – A4  
9 Linzi (near Zhuyuan Hotel), Zhonglouwan Hutong.
- 85 Purple Bamboo – C4  
Offers communication-oriented classes as well as HSK and spoken Chinese courses at all different levels. 61 Wudaoying Hutong. (8244 9617)
- 86 Red Brick Contemporary Art Museum – G4  
A folk-based, non-profit art museum in Cuigezhuang. Hegezhuang Village. ([www.redbrickartmuseum.org/en](http://www.redbrickartmuseum.org/en))
- 87 Ritan Park – C5  
6 Ritan Beilu
- 88 Roundabout – G4  
Collects gently used clothing and household items for redistribution to communities in need across the country. Yuyang Road West, Off Anhua Lu (137 1877 7761)
- 89 Worker's Stadium – C5  
Gongti Beilu



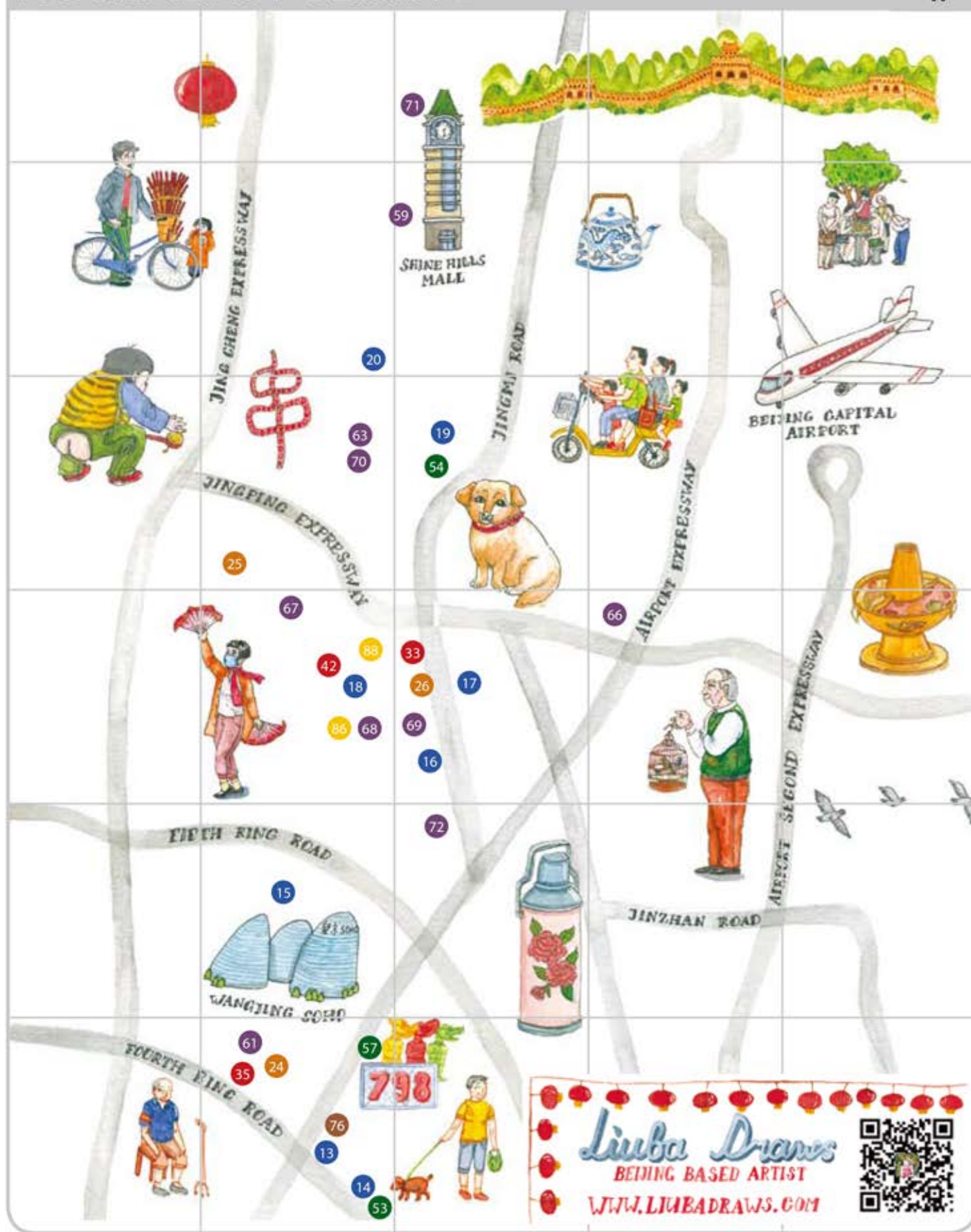
# CENTRAL BEIJING

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# NORTHEAST BEIJING

AN









# VAN CLEEF & ARPELS

2018  
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## 雅艺之美 WHEN ELEGANCE MEETS ART

—  
今日美术馆  
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When AJ Warner is not with his two sons, he's coaching Chinese students on how to get admitted to the top 30 US universities. He also guides Chinese families through the process of sending their child to the US for high school and related homestays. Contact him at [ajwarner@touchdown.org.cn](mailto:ajwarner@touchdown.org.cn).



### Mike Signorelli

Mike Signorelli arrived in Beijing in 1994 as a student and has called China home ever since. He has held several senior management roles over the past 20+ years, including his last corporate job with NBA China. Mike is the founder of Signature Wine, China's first independent subscription wine club. Contact him at [mike@sigwine.com](mailto:mike@sigwine.com).



### Marianne Daquet

In Beijing for 12 years, Marianne Daquet has always been passionate about art and education. She founded Atelier Art School 6 years ago with the mission to pass on her strong belief that creativity can change the world. She and her French husband have two daughters. You can reach her at [Marianne@atelier.cn.com](mailto:Marianne@atelier.cn.com).



### Dominika Mejia

Dominika is career diplomat with a foothold in three continents. She shares a taste for food with a passion for books and travel. She is the author of the bilingual culinary blog D-constructed. While she is full of hope to master Chinese while writing her PhD, she's also the mother of a two-year-old daughter.



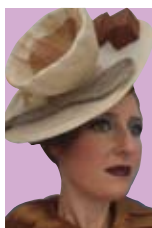
### Caroline Nath

Caroline Nath moved to Beijing as a teenager after having grown up in the US, Canada, France, and India. She is a filmmaker, radio host, Parent Effectiveness Training teacher, founder of Bonne Nani Jams, and an organic food promoter. She has two multi-ethnic and multi-lingual children. Contact her at [kulfidoll@gmail.com](mailto:kulfidoll@gmail.com).



### Elisabeth Koch

China's milliner, Elisabeth Koch, arrived in 2007 and hit the ground running with her hats. This TCK has three children who were born in Beijing. While her creations adorn famous heads on the covers of international glossies, Koch gives hat-making workshops in her studio and is kept busy by the kids. Find out more information at [www.ElisabethKoch.net](http://www.ElisabethKoch.net)



### Lise Floris

Lise is originally from Denmark but has lived abroad since 1998. She took leave from her job in the EU when the family moved to China in December 2015. She also has her own blog ([ninemillionbicycles.weebly.com](http://ninemillionbicycles.weebly.com)) where she writes about her adventures in Beijing and is a freelance writer for various magazines and platforms including Global Times.





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## ON THE COVER

For this year's Home and Relocation Guide, we had the pleasure of working with talented local illustrator, Liubov Vladimirova of the Liuba Draws fame. She's well known throughout the city for her fabulously vibrant depictions of everyday life in Beijing. To learn more about her work and to pick up some souvenirs for friends or family make sure to check out her website at [www.liubadraws.com](http://www.liubadraws.com).





# Arrival Anxiety and the Kung Fu Kid

I remember first stepping off the jet at PEK, into that frigid January night, and not knowing what to expect. All I had was some clothes, some musical instruments so that I could hopefully play a gig or two, and the expectation that I would likely only be in China for about a year. Little did I know that this delightful place would have me locked in for years to come.

I was filled with excitement to be in Beijing as this had been a place I wanted to visit ever since I could talk. My grandmother was a travel agent back in the 80s, and every time we made family trips to visit her, she would break out the slide projector and show us images of her Asian adventures. China just seemed different on so many levels and attracted me early on. I collected picture books, pretended I knew kung fu, and always demolished my Mushu Pork and fried rice on family Chinese takeout nights. At one time my limitless imagination had me convinced that I was adopted and secretly smuggled into the States from China. Not sure about my rationale here, but my parents were obviously not too pleased with this proclamation. I even had a little green hat with a red star that I would wear around the house that quickly got frayed and tattered from constant wear.

So you can imagine getting off that plane and journeying into the city was thrilling for this bright-eyed and bushy-tailed young lad. I could barely sleep for the next week, and would get lost around my hutong neighborhood every day, taking in the sights and smells (good and bad) of my new home, then shooting off to Wudaokou's D-22 in the evening to catch up-and-coming bands. But after a week this music venue closed, and inevitably since I came here alone, loneliness that set in. It wasn't my first time abroad, but it was difficult that I didn't have any good friends to share these experiences with. I was all alone, and had no clue where to meet like-minded people.

I had some acquaintances from class that I would sometimes pick up some *chao jidan xihongshi* with, but none of my ride-or-die mates that I had spent the majority of my post-collegiate days with were here, feasting on morning *baozi* and drinking *Beibingyang* with me. I began second guessing my decision to come here.

I reached my lowest point on a Saturday evening, about a month in, home alone watching *Karate Kid* (aka Kung Fu Kid), the 2010 reboot of the 80s classic. In this coming of age tale Dre, played by Jaden Smith, is not happy that his mother

moved him from his home in Detroit, Michigan to Beijing, but eventually despite constant bullying begins to acclimate to his new surroundings, through his education in Chinese martial arts by Mr. Han, played by Jackie Chan. Inexplicably this struck an emotional chord with me, and my eyes started to moisten ever so slightly.

I couldn't believe that such a basic flick had this effect on me, but I guess some themes rang true, and became my mantra of sorts in the months and even years that followed. While we don't all have a "Mr. Han" character to lead us on a path of personal growth and development, I quickly picked up that friendship is anywhere you take the time to discover it, and to try and limit complaints about this city that stem from how different China is from your country of origin. The more effort you put into weighing out the areas where Beijing doesn't suit your needs as a person or family is time that you are wasting when you could be out experiencing the beauty and enchantment that it contains. That is if the AQI permits, of course. I'm not saying Beijing is perfect, and that we should all immediately succumb to its benevolent power, but instead, we should respect these differences and spend more time finding a community of locals or expats that we can thrive in.

For me, this community was music and art, but one of the great things about Beijing is that there is a little bit of everything at the tip of your fingertips if you just put in the effort, and there are plenty of resources like *beijingkids* and *the Beijinger* to nudge you in the right direction. If you keep these things in mind while settling in, you'll quickly adjust and begin to make the most of your time here for however long you decide to call Beijing your home.

*Kipp Whittaker*

Kipp Whittaker  
Chief Content Manager





# What's New



## LookOut Poised to Break Ground as "First Ever Chinese Arts Festival on Gender"

Billing itself as the "first Chinese arts festival on gender," the four-day LookOut Fest certainly has ambitious aims. The festival encompasses a wide range of mediums, styles, and topics to dissect modern day gender dynamics. Slated to take place Jul 6, 7, 8, and 15, the festival is organized by Ibsen International and the China AIDS Walk in collaboration with the Faculty for Dramatology and Applied Theatre Studies of the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing. Beijingers are invited to enjoy the socially conscious works in a safe and open space.



## Gaokao Scores Now Accepted in the United States

For Chinese students and their families, *gaokao* scores are everything. Studying for the test begins years in advance, so much so that some would say schooling itself is mostly just preparation for the grueling exam. Now, students have options, as this test can be used for international college admission in the US, beginning with The University of New Hampshire. Currently, several schools in Europe, Australia, and Canada are already accepting *gaokao* scores, and given that more than a third of international students in the US are Chinese, many more American schools of higher education can be expected to follow suit.



## Bend it like Beckham

Superstar ex-footballer David Beckham visited Beijing in June, where he stopped by a charity event, played a fun match of football with a children's team, and posed with fans outside of Sanlitun's Taikooli. Beckham himself is no stranger to China. In 2013, Beckham was given the title of global ambassador for Chinese football. "I'm excited by the prospect of promoting the world's greatest game to Chinese sports fans as I've seen first-hand the growing interest in football there," said Beckham during the visit.



## Tian'anmen Rostro Closed for Renovation

Beijing's most famous tourist attraction, The Tian'anmen Rostrum, will be closed for an entire year, reopening late April 2019. According to The State Administration of Cultural Heritage, the landmark is being given a fresh coat of paint, waterproofed, replaced with new pipes as well as other necessary maintenance. The iconic gate with Mao's portrait has been closed or covered for maintenance several times before, most recently in 2015 and 2011. If you're planning on visiting the adjacent Palace Museum after gazing at green mesh, note that they are now closed Mondays for the indefinite future.


PHOTO CREDITS: THE BEIJINGER, WENR, WES.ORG, COURTESY OF LOVE HAINAN ORGANIZERS, SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST, DAILYMAIL.CO.UK




## Hainan Is for Families

The Hainan Provincial Tourism Development Commission courts International families with its "Love Hainan" tourism event. Looking to expand tourism to previously unserved sectors, Hainan is doubling down on promoting the pristine beaches, breathtaking scenery, and clean environment to the flocks of foreign tourists who usually eschew China and instead head to South East Asia on holiday. Last month, Hainan adopted new visa exemption access to citizens from 59 countries, granting 30-day visa free entries (when applied in advance), making it easier than ever to "love Hainan."







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# WHAT'S UP IN BEIJING



Promote your family-friendly event in the *beijingkids* website and magazine!

Submit your activity details before **July 10** to be considered for our August listings.

## 2018 CHINA CHILDREN'S BOOK EXPO

**Jul 13-22**

All ages. The China Children's Book Expo (CCBE) is an annual cultural and family-focused event and industry expo open to all, where authors, illustrators, storytellers, performers, schools, education and publishing professionals gather. RMB 100 per person (weekdays). RMB 120 (weekends). Beijing Exhibition Centre. (Choi Meena: 185 1521 7473, choi\_mina94@daum.net)

## DANISH CHILDREN'S DRAMA ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES

**Jul 26-29**

All ages. The National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) presents the Danish Children's Drama Andersen's Fairy Tales as part of the NCPA International Theatre Festival 2018 and the NCPA International Children's Drama Festival 2018. The theater production is suitable for families and brings classic Andersen fairy tales to life on the stage. RMB 100-580. NCPA.



## CHINA CLUBFOOTBALL SUMMER CAMPS

**Jul-Aug**

Kids 4+. ClubFootball Summer Camps and Courses run throughout the summer, all taught by qualified coaches in the mornings before it gets hot! DCP ClubFootball Summer Camps: 4-day camps featuring football sessions plus a dip in the pool at lunchtime! Jul 17-20, 24-27. ClubFootball World Football Camps: each day focuses on a particular country, with the daily theme based on that country's trademark area of expertise! Jul 17-20, 24-27; Aug 14-17, 21-24. ClubFootball Weekend Courses: At ISB, Lido, Chaoyang Park, Olympic Forest Park, and Wangjing from Jul 7, Sat or Sun. RMB 100-140 per hour. China ClubFootball. (WeChat ID: WGQXJuniors, coaching@clubfootball.com.cn, 5130 6893-96)

## SUMMER COOKING CAMP: LITTLE CHEFS

**Jul 17-Aug 3**

Kids 7+. Pingo Space Summer Cooking Camp is the perfect cooking course for your children where they can learn the basics of cooking, with simple techniques, and kid-friendly recipes for delicious sweet and savory dishes from five different continents! RMB 5,980. 9am-5pm. Cuccina.



## CIRQUE DU SOLEIL'S TORUK: THE FIRST FLIGHT

**Aug 1-12**

All ages. Cirque de Soleil brings to Beijing Toruk: The First Flight, inspired by the sci-fi epic film, Avatar. RMB 280-780. 3pm performance (Sat, Sun) and 7.30pm performance (Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat). Cadillac Arena, 69 Fuxing Road, Haidian District. For more information and to book tickets, visit our website.

## POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM WITH PAULINE CUEVAS

**Aug 2-4**

Adults. This three-day interactive bilingual workshop is designed for teachers, counselors, school staff and administrators who want an effective discipline approach that integrates social and emotional learning while reducing challenging student behaviors. For more information, contact Rebecca at 13071162353 (phone/WeChat)

## WHEN SHOULD MY CHILD START GETTING BRACES?

**Aug 18**

Adults. IDC Dental will give an in-house presentation to parents about getting kids started on orthodontics. Chief Doctor and CEO Dr. Jaclyn Dam-Laute will also answer questions that will help parents make an informed decision about their children's oral health. Coffee and snacks will also be provided and those who attend the event get to take home a goodie bag full of pleasant surprises. Free admission but pre-registration required. 2pm-4pm. IDC Dental. (6538 8111, info@idcdentalbj.com)





## THE BEIJING FLEA MARKET

Aug 25

All ages. The Beijing Flea Market is back for its summer edition at the new location in TechTemple Sanlitun Lounge on August 25. This is Beijing's one-stop shop for all things made in Beijing with more than 40 vendors featuring some of the best local, independent design and crafts from both established and emerging makers. Shoppers will also find baked goods, delicious small-batch homemade jams, drinks and more! Free admission. Noon-6pm. TechTemple Sanlitun (just behind QMex). (WeChat ID: Thebeijingfleamarket)



## SCOUTS REGISTRATION

Aug 18 (Cub Scouts), Aug 25 (Girl Scouts)

Kids 5+. **Cub Scouts:** Boys and girls aged 5 to 11 who are looking for excitement, fun, and to make new friends are invited to sign up for Cub Scouts at International School of Beijing (ISB). Membership is open to all boys and girls, regardless of nationality or school attended, with one important proviso: under Chinese law, the child must hold a foreign (non-Chinese) passport with a valid visa in order to join. You'll also need evidence of your health insurance, and annual fees of RMB 1,200. 10am. ISB. ([www.beijingcubscouts.com](http://www.beijingcubscouts.com))

**Girl Scouts:** This year's Girl Scout registration event for the new school year takes place at Western Academy of Beijing (WAB) on August 25. The Girl Scouts team will also be recruiting leaders for newly forming troops. Girl Scouts is open to foreign passport holders only. RMB 2,000 (new members), RMB 1,700 (girls who don't need a uniform). WAB. (Amy Kennedy: 185 1505 3922, [beijinggirlscouts@usagso.org](mailto:beijinggirlscouts@usagso.org))

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## WAB COMMUNITY PICNIC: FUTURE ADVENTURES

**Aug 25**

All ages. Western Academy of Beijing (WAB) welcomes friends and families of the school community to campus to enjoy a day of fun on Tiger Field. Games and activities will be set up for kids of all ages to enjoy, and you can also enjoy a variety of your favorite local vendors, as well as live music and arts performances. Free admission. WAB. (WeChat ID: WAB\_Chat, 5986 5588, wabinfo@wab.edu)

## CHINA WORLD SUMMIT WING, BEIJING VERTICAL RUN

**Aug 25**

Ages 16+. Don't get left behind (or below) during this year's race to the top. The Vertical Run takes place at the China World Summit Wing Hotel on August 25. This is the sixth time that the Vertical World Circuit has hosted their official race at the tallest building in Beijing. Do you think you can handle 330 meters, 82 floors, or 2,041 steps of vertically challenging fun? Sign up and have fun. RMB 150 (early bird). RMB 180. From 2pm. China World Summit Wing Hotel.

## INN ARRIVAL SURVIVAL

**Aug 27**

All ages. One such organization that has been operating for quite a long time to help foreigners adjust to life in Beijing is the International Newcomers Network (INN). The INN Arrival Survival is where you will not only be connected with others in the same boat but also receive invaluable information to help you better get to know your new host city. Topics covered will include safety in the city, avoiding counterfeits, water and air purification systems, the stresses of settling into Beijing, health insurance, WeChat pay, and financial planning among many others. Check out our website for more details. INN.



## WOMEN'S RETREAT BEIJING: BE YOU REVIVE!

**Sep 16-17**

Adults. Following a successful Mother's Day retreat in May, "Be You" returns this autumn and promises to nourish the body and soul of the participating ladies. The revival cycle takes place on Sep 16-17 in the luxurious surroundings of Deer Singing Lodge, and includes activities like yoga, sip and paint, hiking on the Great Wall, a workshop with a life coach, a goodie bag, and more surprises! Secure your spot today with RMB 100 non-refundable deposit. Check out beijingmothers.com for more details. Singing Deer Lodge. (WeChat: BerryThoughtfulLife, paulus155, pflivanhasselt@yahoo.com)





## THE BOOKWORM CURIO MARKET

Sep 22-24

All ages. The Bookworm is hosting its first-ever Curio Market on September 22-24. Come and explore and lose yourself among the purveyors of all that is curious wonderful artistic and delicious in Beijing. Book lovers, old China hands, newcomers, students, and business travellers alike are invited to unite at the market. Free admission. The Bookworm. (JC Zhang: 158 1071 3743, [mr\\_j.c.zhang@hotmail.com](mailto:mr_j.c.zhang@hotmail.com))

## ROUNDAABOUT 10TH ANNIVERSARY CHARITY GALA BALL

Oct 19

Adults. Roundabout's 10th Anniversary Charity Gala Ball's focus will be to raise money for all the children they support. Gala sponsor ifeng.com will broadcast the event live on their website and on Phoenix TV. There will be an amazing raffle, silent and live auctions, and entertainment from our international community. RMB 1,100. 6pm. Hyatt Regency Wangjing.

## 10TH CHINA RIE FOUNDATIONS: THEORY AND OBSERVATION

Oct 29-Nov 2 and Nov 5-7

Adults. This rich curriculum is beneficial for both parents and professionals who live or work with infants and toddlers. It is presented in a friendly, informal atmosphere where participants will be encouraged to ask questions and receive guidance. Contact 159 0125 0981 for more info about the lectures and prices. Green Garden Nursery Beijing.



## THE BOOKWORM CHRISTMAS MARKET

Dec 8-9

All ages. The Bookworm hosts a Christmas market on December 8-9 where book lovers, newcomers, students, old China hands, and other people unite to see all that is wonderful artistic and truly delicious in Beijing. Free admission. The Bookworm. (JC Zhang: 158 1071 3743, [mr\\_j.c.zhang@hotmail.com](mailto:mr_j.c.zhang@hotmail.com))

## RECURRING EVENTS

### FARM TO NEIGHBORS MARKET

Weekends

Adults. Farm to Neighbors (F2N) is a regular weekend market and a community platform dedicated to promoting sustainable lifestyle and green consumption. F2N organizes farmers' markets to provide the public with experience in sustainable farming, food innovation, original handcraft and eco-friendly living, building connection between local producers and consumers that allows more people to enjoy a lifestyle that is better for our health, society and the environment. Noon-6pm. Grand Summit, Liangmaqiao.



### BEIJING GUILD'S KNITTING AND CROCHET GATHERING

Weekly

All ages. Do you like to knit or crochet? Do you want to learn how? Come join the Beijing Guild at any of the following gatherings. Monday mornings (during school year): Shunyi Pinnacle Plaza Starbucks. Tuesday afternoons and Thursday evenings (all year): Chaoyang District. Meeting locations for the city change weekly. Join the mailing list to get the address each week. Free to join the group, purchase your own food and drinks at venue. Bring your own supplies. (WeChat ID: shareeherbert [Chaoyang], Amy\_Kennedy [Shunyi], Sharee Hebert: 135 0121 3453, [knit@beijingguild.com](mailto:knit@beijingguild.com))

### ICVS LIVING WITH PETS INFO SESSIONS

Monthly

Adults. The International Center for Veterinary Services (ICVS) holds free information sessions to learn what is needed to take your pet with you when the time comes to relocate. ICVS clients receive unlimited, complimentary pet relocation, and counseling. Free admission but RSVP needed. ICVS Wangjing Clinic. (WeChat ID: ICVSCHINA. Mary Peng: 8456 1939, [reception@ICVSASIA.com](mailto:reception@ICVSASIA.com))

### RUMBLE IN THE JUMBLE

Monthly

All ages. The Rumble in the Jumble team holds a monthly "jumble sale" but with Beijing characteristics. Previous jumble sales included vendors offering tarot card readings, baked goodies, jewellery and, of course, plenty of second-hand clothes. Each month has a theme, like Guilty Pleasures, April Showers, Calypso Carnival, Garden Party, and their Christmas Market. Free admission. For more updates, follow the Rumble in the Jumble team on WeChat (ID: Rumble BJ)



# HEY, LET'S WECHAT!

This powerful social media app will change the way you think about the internet in China

*By Andy Penafuerte III*



**W**elcome to your new home in Beijing! I know that it will take time for you to get around to everything you need to do here in the city. But if there's one piece of advice that you need to follow, that will be to download WeChat. Do it now! Immediately!

OK, think of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Apple Pay, and all the other social apps that you use. Most of the major functions of those apps are available on WeChat. This app is essentially one heck of a social media giant that will help you in the coming days, months, and years during your stay in China.

That being said, it might seem that WeChat is just like any other social platform, but let me tell you: it is beyond that. From chatting and networking, to paying bills and utilities, and even donating to charity, WeChat can do almost everything. And while I was finishing this article, the app was updated, and I needed to rewrite some parts because they were upgraded in an instant!

Using the app is easy-peasy, and its interface is pretty intuitive and user-friendly. Signing up is effortless as long as you already have your mobile number ready. But remember that a Chinese mobile number is linked to your passport as a means of verification, and you'll be using that number to access many of the app functions, like mobile payments and joining large groups.

Now look at your app homepage. On the top right of the screen, you'll see a plus (+) icon. Under that menu, you'll see four options. Tap "Scan" and point your phone camera towards the QR code above.

That's our official WeChat account! Tap "Follow" and on our account you'll see daily updates, stories, event information, and all the other essential resources to help you in your new home! Now, tap "Back" twice to get back to the app's homepage.

QR codes are very much ubiquitous in China, and there will be times that you need to point-and-scan to unlock many things here, such as adding contacts, paying vendors, or accessing hyperlinks and information, to name just a few.

PHOTOS: ANDY PENA FUERTE III



# WECHAT FUNCTIONS

As I've mentioned, the app interface is pretty user-friendly. But we're going to explain the most basic functions, categorized by their location in the screen.

## More (+)

Top right icon on the home page



**Scan** is pretty much like the example we've given on the previous page. This function also now allows instant translations from Chinese characters into English.



**Money** is disabled by default, unless you already linked your Chinese bank card to your account. When enabled, it shows a bar code and a QR code, which other people can scan to collect payments.

## Contacts

Second icon on the bottom menu



**New Friends** is where you'll see all the people who've added you. Tap **Mobile Contacts** to upload your contacts who have linked their mobile numbers into their WeChat accounts.



**Group Chat** shows all the group chats you've saved.



**Tags** is a list of, yes, tags. It'll be particularly helpful when you need to categorize your contacts.



**Official Accounts** contains the accounts you're subscribed to (if you tapped "Follow" earlier, you'll see our account!).

## Discover

Third icon on the bottom menu



**Moments** is like a scaled-down version of Facebook's Timeline or a Twitter feed. **Scan** is also present in this menu.



**Top Stories** is a curated list of trending topics in Chinese.



**Mini Programs** can be considered as in-app websites. Most of them are in Chinese, though, and require a higher level of Chinese knowledge to navigate.



## Me

Fourth icon on the bottom menu



**Favorites** contains the WeChat articles, photos, attachments, and other items that you marked as a "favorite." It is helpful, for example, when you need to revisit an article for later reading.



**My Posts** is like your Facebook wall, and includes all the items you posted. The three dots (...) icon will show your friends' comments, and the big camera icon on the current day prompts you to post photos or short videos.



**Sticker Gallery** is a repository of all saved and bought stickers.



**Wallet** is a powerful function that, as its name suggests, acts as your wallet (albeit digitally). Once accessible, you can transfer and receive money, accept digital red packets, top up mobile credits, purchase tickets, donate for charity, and more. We'll talk more about that in detail on the next page.



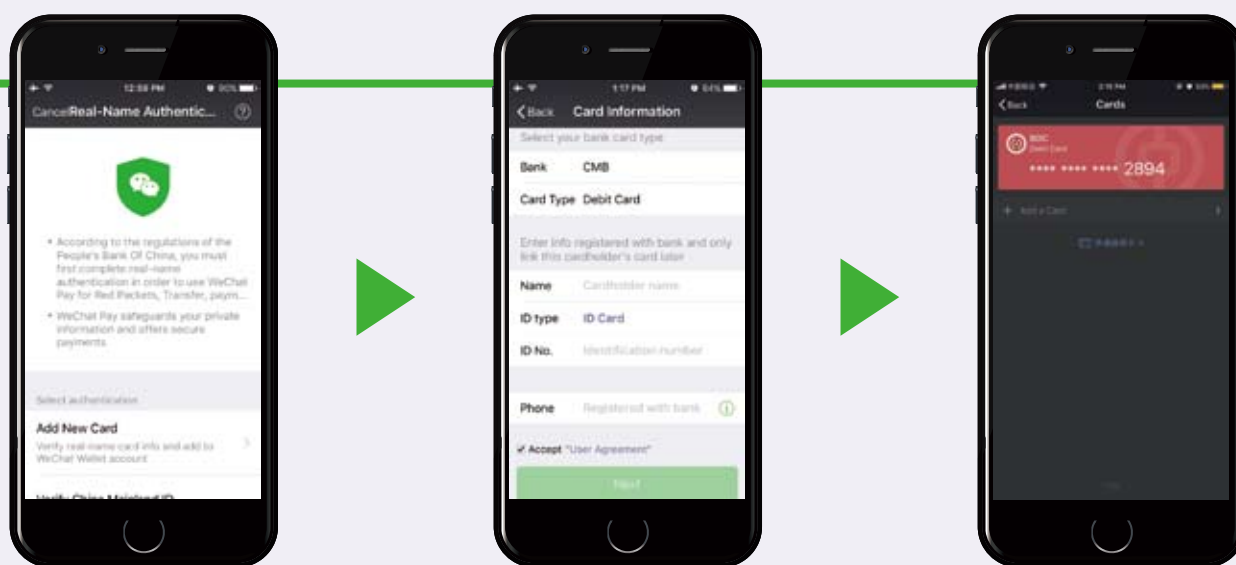
**Cards & Offers** contains digital vouchers which you can get by purchasing items from various vendors using WeChat Wallet.

# SETTING UP YOUR WECHAT WALLET

One of the WeChat functions that you need to access immediately is WeChat Wallet, as it can make your life China easier in all sorts of ways. There's information online about this function but unfortunately it gets outdated very quickly, as WeChat implement strings of updates to abide by new government regulations.

The Wallet function is readily available to WeChat accounts set up inside China (also if you downloaded the app here), but it's hidden for accounts set up in the international version of the app. If you already have an account before moving to China, a quick way to activate WeChat Wallet is by asking someone who already has that function to transfer you a small amount of digital cash. When you try to receive that money, WeChat will prompt you to link a bank card or a mainland ID (exclusive to Chinese citizens) to verify your identity.

At the moment, WeChat Wallet allows linking of almost every local Chinese bank card, and a few foreign credit cards with MasterCard, Visa, or JCB. Linking your WeChat Wallet to your local Chinese bank card is easy, even if you set up your WeChat account overseas.



**Step 1:** To access WeChat Wallet, have someone transfer you any amount of money. It can be as little as RMB 0.01. Once you open it, you'll be prompted to do a real name authentication. If you set up your WeChat account in China, you can skip this and move straight to Step 2.

**Step 2:** Select "Add New Card" to link your local Chinese bank card and you'll be prompted to enter information, such as your full name, passport number, occupation, and region in China. Important note: Make sure you input your name the exact way as the bank inputted it into their system. The name field is case sensitive.

**Step 3:** WeChat sends a code to the phone number linked to your bank account. (This is a very common method of verification in China.) Enter the code in the appropriate box. Once you have successfully linked your local bank card, the Wallet function will be available and should stay under the "Me" tab from now on.

At the time of writing, linking a foreign credit card to your WeChat Wallet is technically possible. However, several tech insiders who tried doing so have noted that the hassle of linking credit cards outweighs the benefits, since in many cases you cannot use the card to pay or transfer money outside of China. We recommend just using a local Chinese bank card.

Anyway, let's have a run-through of the functions under the WeChat Wallet tab.

The first three icons, *Money*, *Balance*, and *Cards* are interlinked to one another.

*Money* is used when paying vendors. Hold the QR code and bar code out to them, they'll scan it, and the payment is made. Under this function are several items, but one that you're likely

to use is *Receive Money*, where people can scan a QR code to transfer you money.

*Balance* contains your digital money, including sums you received from digital red packets and transfers. *Top Up* withdraws money from your bank account, and *Withdraw* sends money back to your bank account. On the top right side is *Transactions* that records the amount of money you received or released.

*Cards* is a list of connected bank cards.

The other functions are named in English but their separate pages are in Chinese. The one function that is in English all throughout is *Mobile Top Up*, which allows you to buy phone and data credits for your linked phone number.



# THINK BEFORE YOU POST

One more function that is unlocked when you get your WeChat Wallet running is getting into large group chats. You can set up your own small group even if you don't have the Wallet function, but when you want to set out and explore the wide WeChat world we live in, you will want to join large groups. Again, the Wallet function verifies your identity, and such is important in many groups because WeChat's system is monitored by the government.

Don't let that scare you out of joining in meaningful conversations. WeChat groups form online communities and support systems and have become an essential part of social communication in China. But before you get into too many groups, it is always good to note the growing importance of netiquette and the idea of "Think Before You Post."

## Rules and Regulations

Following many large groups can be a hassle, especially if notifications just pop up and messages occupy large amounts of your phone space. That's where group rules come in. Many group owners and administrators post notices and rules when the group has grown big and become unmanageable.

Admins have a tricky job enforcing rules while keeping them balanced: if they're too strict, the group chat becomes rigid and members will be unwilling to contribute; too lax and the group can be flooded with spam. Admins can also remove members who disregard the rules or blatantly offend other people. So as a newcomer to a group, make sure that you read the group notice, and ask permission of the group admin/owner when you post product reviews or articles, work-related questions, or anything else you feel unsure of involving a lot of people in.



## Voice Messages

This function is quite polarizing. Say you're walking down the street and you need to send an urgent message, but you can't type it down. This is where the efficiency of a voice message comes in. But if you send it to a large group of people who have their own business to focus on, then others may become irritated at having to stop what they're doing and listen to your message. Many people have a preference in sending messages, but consider your recipients' preferences too. You can always revert to the old-fashioned phone call, or better yet, arrange to meet face to face.

## Stickers and Smileys

Stickers can bring humor to conversations, but many find smileys and emojis to be hackneyed and fake. Stickers can function as an animated version of smileys, and this form of non-verbal communication is actually fun and appealing when you know the context and intent of the person you're talking to. But as much as physical non-verbal communication can be misinterpreted, stickers and smileys have a tendency to add even more confusion to a misconception. There are groups that allow the use of stickers in conversations, but be careful because too many stickers could be seen as spam or offend other members.

## Moments

Your whole contact list can see your Moments, or your personal wall, unless you hide them to specific people or tags. Your friends who are connected to each other can see your post likes and comments, but cannot view anything sent by others not in their personal contact lists.

You can dictate what kind of content you want to post on your Moments, but not what others can show on theirs. Social media marketer Marina Barayeva says Chinese people are "shy to share their opinion on social media", and many users read Moments contents without fully engaging with them or the poster.

As your network grows, expect to see personal photos; marketing and promotional posts, which Barayeva sees as a big advantage for small enterprises; or viral links on your Moments. You can hide those you think unnecessary posts by doing this: Tap the contact name > go to "... (top right of the screen) > and tap "Hide His/Her Moments."

## Personal introductions

The line between personal chats and doing business on WeChat has blurred, so that the app has effectively become a marketing machine. While the app is helpful for networking, too many contacts make your network tangled. You can also opt not to accept random contact requests. Another necessary fix is tagging contacts in categories like "Business", "Friends", or any other relevant categories.

When the time comes that you need to introduce people to others, Mike Gropp of Lead with Words, a firm specializing in corporate communication, advises that it's always better to ask permission first from both sides and inform them of your intent. Or if you need to connect with a person from a large group, tell them the reason why you are adding them before you send your friend connection request.

## WeChat as Business

Gone are the days when you need a business card to network, because many people now regard WeChat as a tool of business communication. It's true that the app facilitates interaction, but it also promotes instant gratification so that a delayed or missed response can be misconstrued.

One particular annoyance that many well-connected people mentioned to me is: instant contact = instant response. Would you respond to a business message sent to you just before midnight? Sadly, many people see WeChat as a business communication tool that requires everyone to respond to every single message right away. It shouldn't be the case.

# ESSENTIAL CONTACTS YOU NEED TO ADD

We've been running a website series that lists the most essential WeChat contacts you need to follow. We all know that there is literally no limit to what you can find through this essential app, but here are a couple of our favorites that we think you should know. You can find more comprehensive lists on our website! Do you have any great WeChat contacts? Let us know!

## Food and Goods


### Balmain Gourmet

Owner Drew Howard says his product line includes over 50 kinds of sausage, so his menu changes every week.

 18600039708

### Bonne Nani

Founder Caroline Nath says her enterprise is a "small side business" where she sells French jams, chutneys, pesto, and other sauces.

 CN69696969696969

### Cheese Gouverneur

Delivers cheese, free shipping on orders above RMB 299.

 CheeseGouverneur

### Elvira's Nuts

Homemade breakfast cereals, chutneys, relishes, and cocoa pops.

 asteroidelvira


### Halo Hummus

Homemade fusion hummus and focaccia bread, using locally sourced and organic ingredients where possible.

 NicoleBonnah


### Parwaaz: Spice Route Concepts

Indian spices, chutneys, pickles, and spice blends.

 Reshma-Khan

### Shared Harvest

A farm that provides a weekly list of the vegetables they have on offer. Pay RMB 3,000 to open an account, and each week they will take off what you spend till you get to zero.

 13321123291


### Signature Wine

A monthly subscription club that sells high-quality wine, and provides information and tasting notes for each bottle.

 MikeSig

### Sweet Indulgence

Homemade special cakes and other pastries.

 Sweet\_Indulgence

### Two Guys and a Pie

A range of Australian-style pies delivered frozen.

 coladapinot

## Health and Wellness


### AQblue Mask

Colorful and quality pollution masks that fit everyone.

 jdb186

### Beijing United Family Hospital

One of the largest Beijing hospitals that caters to expats.

 gh\_a03ddc08d8a9

### CandleX

A group dedicated to bringing knowledge, awareness and support for mental health.

 candlex2015


### IDC Dental

A multi-specialty dental clinic which prides itself on its ability to provide personalized care to each of its patients.

 idcdental

### Shelley's Traditional Chinese Medicine Services

Shelley, a bilingual local, provides acupuncture, cupping, moxibustion, and other traditional Chinese medicine services. Her expertise comes highly recommended in the expat community.

 13439386197

## Beauty and Lifestyle

### Atelier

A school dedicated to the study of the visual, literary and performing arts, which offers high-quality courses led by professionals in their field for children, adolescents, and adults.

 atelier\_apas

### Baopals

Baopals make digital shopping in China made easier as their site is linked to WeChat.

 baopals

### Dave's Studio

Professional photographer Dave captures family photos and makes everyone look amazing.

 dlhzao


### Elisabeth Koch Millinery

Montprepreneur who owns a hat shop and runs hat-making workshops.

 amazinghats

### Great Wall Tours by Mister Dong

Do you have family coming over that want to see the sights? Tour guide Mister Dong's services might be more expensive than other guides, but he speaks great English and is recommended by many expat families.

 Tom105780102

### International Center for Veterinary Services (ICVS)

A professionally managed and affordable full-service, international standard animal hospital and pet care facility.

 BrassCupcake

### Liuba Draws

Illustrator Liubov Vladimirova has made Beijing her workshop, capturing daily living and culture and transforming them into artisanal souvenirs.

 liubatje

### Purple Bamboo

Offers communication-oriented classes, business topics, and rhetoric, as well as HSK and spoken Chinese courses at all different levels.

 PurpleBamboo-Joyce

### Souky Souky

Ellen Dittmar's enterprise is where you can purchase original and majestic-looking pillows that are made to be treasured and kept forever.

 ellendittmar

### Ysepia

A brand of women's clothes and jewelry that sources fabrics and materials from across Asia.

 Audepaname

## Volunteer Causes

### Bread for Life Bakery

Produces bread and cakes and provides work for disabled orphans.

 BreadofLifeBakery

### International Newcomers Network

A resource for newcomers and seasoned foreigners to obtain info about living in Beijing and keep up with community events.

 INNBeijing1994

### Migrant Children's Foundation

A non-profit organization based in Beijing that helps disadvantaged children in China through voluntary work, sponsorship, and vocational activities.

 Migrant\_Children

### Roundabout

A donation and distribution center where they provide a free service to pass on donated items directly to those in need, or sell them in their retail store.

 Roundabout666

## Other Essential Accounts

### the Beijinger

Our sister brand provides you something fresh every time!

 theBeijinger

### CGTN Official

Official account of the state media, China Global Television Network.

 cgtnofficial

### China Daily

Provides China news, in-depth reports, analysis, photos, and info for expats.

 RealTimeChina

### TechNode

A leading resource for news and info about China's startup and tech ecosystem.

 TechNodeEN

### Beijing Bookworm

Beijing's literary hub, a bookshop and library, bar, café, and events space wrapped up in one.

 BeijingBookworm

### Rumble in the Jumble

A monthly thrift and craft market extravaganza showcasing the best of Beijing's makers and doers.

 RumbleBJ



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BEIJING





# WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR

Your 2018 guide to Beijing's most  
expat-friendly neighborhoods

*By Kipp Whittaker*

PHOTOS: KIPP WHITTAKER



**W**e often think of Beijing as a massive, cosmopolitan metropolis awkwardly positioned on top of an ancient city, but surprisingly the majority of Beijing is rural. Taking up over 16,000 sqkm of land, Beijing is so massive it actually should be viewed as a county rather than a city. This can make it a daunting task for finding the most appropriate neighborhood for you and your family to settle down.

Beijing itself is broken up into districts, with the center districts considered to be the main part of the “city” of Beijing. Districts themselves can be massive, with populations equaling the size of whole European cities, and they house diverse, ever-changing, neighborhoods within.

Like in all major cities when settling on an area to live in, your neighborhood very much reflects your personality and the unique social, professional, or cultural needs of you and your family.

Areas like Sanlitun, the Central Business District (CBD), and Liangmaqiao are expensive and filled with shopping malls and a more developed western food scene that attracts a wealthier Chinese and expat clientele.

The trendy areas of the city, where many young expats tend to reside would be the hutongs. These neighborhoods are located primarily in Dongzhimen or Gulou and often attract those looking for a more authentic Beijing experience, due to their picturesque though sometimes gritty setting. But this can be an inconvenient option for some families as markets with international goods aren’t very close, the plumbing is old, and these old houses can get cold during the winter.

For expat families who’d prefer to settle down in neighborhoods near reputable schools, Shunyi is likely your best option, but it is a far drive out of the dynamic city center. Far-flung neighborhoods have much cheaper rent, but can often lack nightlife, a diverse dining scene, or many other creature comforts that we crave to maintain our social lives.

Herein you’ll discover all of the pros and cons of each neighborhood, which we hope will help guide you in your search for the perfect place to live, learn, eat, and play for as long as you decide to call this incredible city home.





# SANLITUN, XINGFUCUN, AND DONGZHIMEN

## 三里屯, 幸福村, 东直门

Sanlitun and its surrounding areas are major expat hubs. With many bars, clubs, and restaurants concentrated in one place, it's a fast-changing, very commercialized area. Just west of Sanlitun lies the quieter Xingfucun with its own developing bar and restaurant scene, while to the north is Dongzhimen, which contains one of the city's major embassy districts. Inner Dongzhimen, on the other hand, is a gateway to historical neighborhoods, such as Gulou, Andingmen, and Yonghegong. However, many of these old Beijing neighborhoods are being demolished to initiate new developments, such as the extension of the Airport Express, as the city makes moves to modernize.

### Pros

- + A high concentration of international bars and restaurants
- + Lots of events for couples and families
- + Access to schools
- + Western-style amenities
- + Many other expat families
- + Hutongs and cultural areas
- + Airport Express stop in Dongzhimen is very convenient

### Cons

- Living inside the expat bubble
- Inconvenient subway access (nearest Lines are 2, 10, and 13), but this will change in the near future
- Frequent traffic
- Seedier areas at night such as Sanlitun
- Not as green as some of the other neighborhoods covered

Worker's Stadium





Sanlitun Soho



Tuanjiehu Park



Taco Bar

### Compounds

Seasons Park, in particular, is popular with expat families as it is close to banks, restaurants, and western supermarkets and has a kids' playground. Also popular with a large number of expats who have kids is Lianbao Garden. Located just behind the foreign grocery chain April Gourmet in Xingfucun, Lianbao has a convenient location, spacious apartments, and a children's playground. Tayuan DRC has historically been a more upscale choice for well compensated professionals or diplomats. It is one of the five diplomatic residence compounds (DRC) originally built to serve Beijing's diplomatic and foreign community. Located just north of the Canadian Embassy, the compound contains relatively spacious western-style apartments, a big stretch of grass within, and even has its own import market.

### Schools

In Sanlitun, you can choose between a number of top notch schools including Daystar Academy's Sanlitun campus, The British School of Beijing (BSB), Sanlitun and their new early learning center, and Beijing No. 55 High School which offers both middle and high school in Xingfucun.

### Shopping

Shopping abounds in Sanlitun, from foreign goods markets to mom and pop shops to vintage boutiques to huge malls. One major shopping and dining hub is Taikoo Li, a sprawling village-style mall with many name brand products. While many of these stores are on the pricy side, it is a great place for window shopping and getting a walk in. Just south of Taikoo Li is Sanlitun Soho. This is a great spot for finding an affordable tailor to make some of your bespoke fashion fantasies come to life!

### Dining

Beijing's dining scene is highly developed. Besides the many western-style restaurants in Taikoo Li and the adjacent Nali Patio, there's plenty of options at Topwin Center, like Beyond Yakatori and Avocado Tree, or the neighboring Courtyard 4 where you'll find Home Plate BBQ and Taco Bar. Head over to Dongzhimen's Guijie, for acres of hot pot restaurants. Here, you'll also find that the nearby hutongs have numerous local noodle shops and regional Chinese cuisine. Xingfucun is also home to a growing number of bars and restaurants, including O'Steak, 京-A Taproom, and Cannon's Burgers.



Taikoo Li

### Where to Play

Beijing is a huge city with a lot of places to go and things to do, yet many venues can be intolerably crowded during the weekend. During the hot days of summer, Tuanjiehu Park is home to the downtown's best water park, and also features roller-skating and rides. There are also several cinemas in Sanlitun that show a handful of Hollywood films. Just a short walk west from Taikoo Li you will spot Shimao Department Store, which is great for finding many kid-friendly activities including play learning venues, toy stores, and much more. For bibliophiles, The Bookworm is Beijing's long running bilingual bookstore and book lending library with regular story times, baby singing groups, and other family-friendly fun that can be a great escape from the hustle and bustle of this commercial neighborhood.





# CHAOYANG PARK AND LIANGMAQIAO

## 朝阳公园和亮马桥

Surrounded by embassies, Chaoyang Park is the largest, most western-style park in the city and is very popular with middle-class Chinese families and the expat community. Lined with shops, restaurants, and residential compounds, this area is easy for daily living. Solana Lifestyle Shopping Park is pretty much modeled after the mixed indoor/outdoor malls of the west, while nearby Liangmaqiao is a busy commercial area with many expat conveniences and high-end hotels where you can enjoy some amazing fine dining options. This neighborhood is a great option if you require a space that isn't flooded with cars and electric scooters to get a run in every once in a while.

### Pros

- + Proximity to Chaoyang Park (which hosts free yoga sessions, Heyrobics, HeyRunning, pick-up soccer games, and more)
- + Many western supermarkets and restaurants
- + Several embassies and schools

### Cons

- Some compounds are farther from subway access
- Living inside the expat bubble
- Higher cost of living when compared to some other inner city areas

Yume Wo Katare



### Residential Compounds

Several residential compounds are available in Chaoyang. Palm Springs has north-facing units overlooking Chaoyang Park, a Roman-style garden, large clubhouse with an indoor swimming pool, children's playground, sauna, and gym—it's no wonder it's popular with families. Park Avenue has a shopping complex with imported groceries, cafes, and sporting good stores in addition to its children's playground, swimming pool, and gym. Greenlake Place is another option, and has many stores, restaurants, and even a Jenny Lou's in the compound.

### Schools

Canadian International School of Beijing (CISB), Beanstalk International Bilingual School (BIBS), House of Knowledge (HoK), and Ivy Academy are all top notch and convenient options if you are residing in this area of the city.



Solana Lifestyle and Shopping Park



Yoga in the Park

### Shopping

Solana Lifestyle and Shopping Park is a large, popular open-air mall next to Chaoyang Park. It's one of the most known shopping centers for families, and features International name brands like Zara, Uniqlo, Muji, H&M, American Eagle, Gap, and more. Also, if you are craving something that's not all that different from the farmer's markets back home, check out Farm2Neighbors at Beijing Grand Summit each weekend for a selection of some of the city's best vendors of organic produce and specialty goods.

### Dining

If you are looking for international restaurants in the neighborhood make sure to head to Beijing Grand Summit where you'll find Baker and Spice, Obentos (Japanese, healthy), and much more, or head to Solana which houses Beijing favorites like Moka Bros, Tribe, and Tube Station Pizza. Just a short jaunt away from Solana

to Maizidian and you'll find some of the best Japanese food in Beijing at restaurants like Yume Wo Katate, serving up hearty bowls of ramen, or Vin Vie, where you'll find inventive izakaya with a western touch.

### Where to Play

As the largest patch of green space in Beijing, Chaoyang Park is the obvious choice. Entrance is inexpensive and there's a lot of room to move around. Young visitors can fly kites, rent a pedal boat for the lake, go on fairground rides, or even participate in group yoga and exercise classes on the weekends if weather and AQI permit. When your kids are exhausted from the park, Solana Lifestyle Shopping Park is located a stone's throw away. This family favorite has been open since 2008, with its fountains and whimsical decorations. Indoors, there's an entire children's wing with play facilities and family-oriented shops.



Farm2Neighbors



#### Pros

- + Affluent
- + Easy to get to other parts of the city due to subway lines and buses
- + Plenty of shopping in the area
- + Attractions in areas nearby
- + Great food and beverage scene
- + An active expat community with frequent events such as the Shuangjing Block Party

#### Cons

- Heaviest traffic
- Crowded
- Pollution gets heavy
- Additional school options for older children requires a commute
- One public park area shared with Shuangjing
- Not much authentic Beijing culture
- Most green space is within compounds rather than publicly shared

# CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD) AND SHUANGJING

北京商务中心, 双井

Sandwiched in a four square kilometer area between the Third and Fourth Ring Roads, the CBD is the financial center of the city. Modern high rises, luxury shopping, five-star hotels, and major companies make up much of the environment. The famous CCTV Tower, or "Big Pants," is CBD's most recognizable landmark. Located just south of CBD, Shuangjing was once a no man's land of factories, but is now home to higher-end housing. With one of the highest concentrations of residential compounds in Chaoyang District, Shuangjing has a diverse population of white-collar locals and expat families who have settled in the area due to its proximity to schools and CBD workplaces.

Central Park



### Residential Compounds

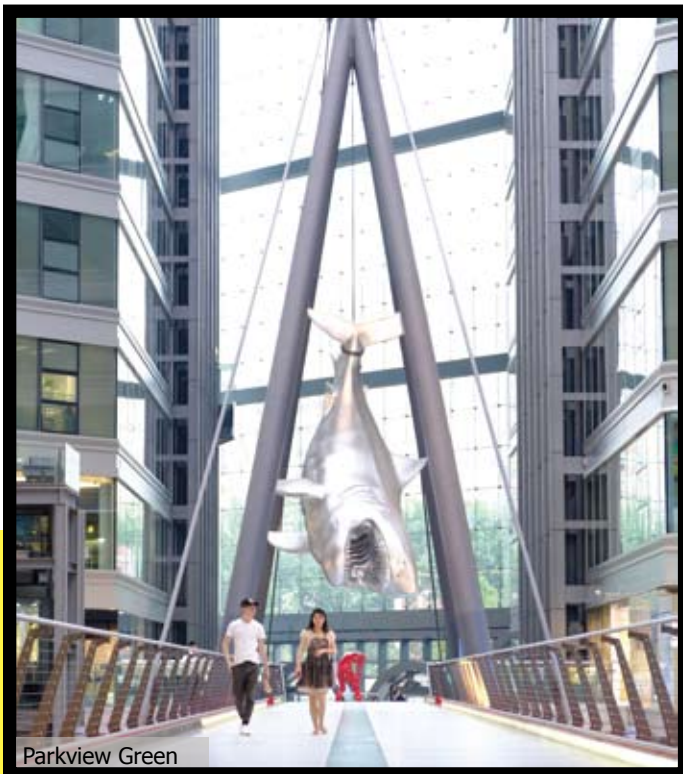
Residential compounds abound in CBD. The aptly named Central Park features a central location in a large compound filled with restaurants, shops, cafes, beauty services, and even a bakery. Central Park has its own indoor swimming pool, sauna, squash court, and gym. Gemdale International Garden and the nearby shopping center Gemdale Plaza, also have a real neighborhood feel, with on-site markets, restaurants, cafes, a post office, a gym, a swimming pool, and a children's playground. Pingod, nicknamed "Apple Community," is another large compound with a good selection of convenience stores, close public transport and shops. Adjacent to Viva Mall, Fulicheng has a gym and health club, children's play areas, and a clubhouse. Landgent International apartments surround a man-made lake and central garden, and is located near Carrefour, cafes, florists, laundry services, post office, and banks.

### Schools

There are plenty of schools in Beijing's CBD and Shuangjing neighborhoods including Beijing City International School (BCIS) and Yew Chung International School, Beijing (YCIS, Beijing) which offer grades from kindergarten to high school, while Etonkids, Ivy Academy, and the Canadian International School of Beijing's Jianguomen campus offer learning for students just beginning their academic careers.



Migas Mercado



Parkview Green



Arcade By the Hatchery

### Shopping

CBD has a number of high-end shopping malls frequented by business travelers, expats, and locals, such as Shin Kong Place, China World Mall, Kerry Center, and the LEED-certified Parkview Green. For more midrange options, The Place has Zara, H&M, and Uniqlo. In Shuangjing, Carrefour, Decathlon, Viva Mall, and the recently completed Hopson One Mall are within walking distance of the area's many residential compounds.

### Dining

Restaurants tend to be concentrated in malls or compounds. For example, Central Park has several options such as The Woods (Modern European), Thai Lime Cafe, and LMPlus (Italian), while The Place has Moka Bros and Herbal Cafe (Cantonese). China World Mall and its labyrinth of connected buildings in Guomao also have a plethora of fun restaurants, including Migas Mercado, Arcade By Hatchery, and Beer-smiths. Shuangjing has recently gained expat favorites like Qmex and Blue Frog, and is continuing to grow in its offerings by the month.

### Where to Play

For outdoor activities, Ritan Park is a green oasis in the middle of the CBD's concrete jungle. It's a great place to let kids burn off their energy and learn about some Beijing history and culture. There are also some modern-day touches, like a climbing wall and a decent playground. The Place is home to a number of great kids play areas both inside and outside the facility, including kid's work out space, My Gym. Parkview Green is more upscale, with filtered air for polluted days. A regular destination at Parkview Green for visiting mums and babies is Little Oasis, a popular indoor play area. Moms would be glad to know that breastfeeding and baby changing rooms are particularly plentiful and clean at this fancy shopping mall. For more kid friendly cultural events, Ready Reading Library is a bilingual kid's library offering an extensive selection of books catered towards children under the age of nine. They also sell an array of kid's toys, organize arts and crafts classes, and often put on fun live storytelling events.



# WANGJING AND LIDO

## 望京和丽都

Wangjing and Lido lie halfway between Shunyi and downtown Beijing. These areas are popular with both families and expat English teachers due to their relatively cheaper rent, access to international hospitals and schools, and proximity to major foreign companies such as Samsung, Ericsson, Nokia, and Microsoft. Both have significant Korean communities, especially Wangjing, which hosts a cornucopia of Korean chain stores, restaurants, and groceries.

### Pros

- + Short commute to international schools in Laiguangying and Beigao area
- + Proximity to the headquarters of foreign companies
- + Close to family-friendly destinations such as Si'de Park
- + 798 Art District
- + Indigo Mall

### Cons

- Limited things to do for families, though the area is growing
- Lacks authentic Beijing culture
- Connected to the city via satellite subway lines (13, 14, and 15)

Indigo Mall





Lunaluz Kids Cafe

Ramo

### Residential Compounds

Wangjing and Lido have a number of choice compounds on offer. Wangjing Huayuan is in a great location; close to local kindergartens, Chinese groceries, banks, hospitals, post office, beauty salons, and even a Wal-Mart. Upper East Side is also well located, and has its own gym, sauna, and swimming pool, as well as a coffee shop within the compound. Chateau Regency has a fitness center, a convenience store, and a playground. Mookey Swim, a popular parent-owned center offering baby swimming classes, is also located on the ground floor of Chateau Regency.

### Schools

Beijing World Youth Academy (BWYA) and 3e International School can both be found in Wangjing. There are also other international schools that cater specifically to the dense population of Koreans and Japanese in the neighborhood. Olivia's Place is also good to know if you require learning support or other special needs services.

### Shopping

The world's second largest IKEA is located in Wangjing, right by French grocery chain Carrefour with its built-in air purification and water recycling systems. Indigo Mall near 798 Art District offers entertainment, good shopping and dining, with a cinema, restaurants, BHG Market-place, frequent children's events, and a large outdoor playground.

### Dining

Wangjing has some great Korean restaurants and markets. Next to Si'de Park, the Korean-owned CJ Foodworld houses a Tous les Jours bakery, Bibigo, and Twosome Coffee. There's also Element Fresh, Ramo which is very kid friendly, Annie's, Taj Pavilion, and more. If you are looking for a superb spot to brunch when the weekend hits, then look no further than either Nuo Hotel Beijing's N'Joy or East Hotel's Feast, both in Lido.

### Where to Play

Wangjing and Lido both have a very vibrant expat scene with plenty of entertainment options. Lido Place is a popular apartment and mall complex where many foreigners reside and also many fairs and bazaars are held. This can be great for those looking to connect with the local crafts scene or the occasional farmer's market. Another option is Indigo Mall, located just south of 798, which hosts regular kids' events in its airy atrium space. They also have numerous restaurants, children's brands, and play centers. In the warmer months, families can access the Indigo Playground out back, which features a fountain and two play areas connected by a garden. For greenery, Si'de Park in Lido is a modest park and a popular destination for families which features a running track that winds around the entirety of the park, along with a roller skating rink, a fishing pond, soccer field, playground, a bouncy castle, and fairground rides. For culture, The New City Center, tucked away above the Yuan Art Museum in Wangjing, is a cross between a cafe, community center, and events venue. Founded by expat Canadians, the New City Center offers children's programs and after school classes. Another recent find was the Lunaluz Kids Café at Kirin Place.

This a great spot for parents to work while kids get their necessary dose of indoor play.





# SHUNYI, BEIGAO, AND LAIGUANGYING

顺义, 北皋和, 来广营

Shunyi and its environment is catered primarily for families. The school community and sports activities play a large part in the vibe of these neighborhoods. So if you're looking for a more suburban experience, Shunyi is where you'll want to be. There are villa compounds, complete with quaint street names and two-car garages. Most families who choose to live here want a posh China experience, need quick access to the airport, or want to avoid the hectic pace of the city. For years, this entire area has been called Shunyi by expats, but technically most of the area is still in Chaoyang District. If you're talking to Chinese locals or taxi drivers, you'll want to be sure to specify specific neighborhoods rather than lump the area entirely as "Shunyi."

## Pros

- + Close access to the airport
- + Safe suburban-style neighborhoods
- + More options for kids interested in sports
- + Largest access to area schools (39 schools in a reasonable distance)

## Cons

- Largest distances between interest points
- Car or driver needed
- Expat bubble
- Cost of living

Shine Hills





Pie Squared

### Residential Compounds

There are a lot of good options in the area. Most have lots of on-site businesses, like cafes, supermarkets, restaurants, and gyms. Beijing Riviera has large green spaces and an artificial lake, along with a clubhouse, cafe, swimming pool, gym, tennis and squash courts, and a bicycle track. It also features an on-site kindergarten and is located near Didi's Supermarket and Roundabout's secondhand store. Right across the street is Quanfa Garden, which can have some lovely homes for rent. Capital Paradise, near to Pinnacle Plaza, is also chock full of active options, features outdoor and indoor swimming pools, gym, squash, tennis courts, sauna, outdoor and indoor children's playgrounds. Yosemite Compound has a clubhouse, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, hot springs, and a children's activity center. Finally, Grand Hills is a popular residential choice for many expats because of its well-kept grounds and relatively new villas. The surroundings include a swimming pool, sauna, and gym with plenty of green space.

### Schools

Where do we begin? Most of Beijing's prestigious international schools are located in this district. Any sort of education you might be looking for is likely here. Harrow Beijing, The British School of Beijing (BSB), Shunyi, Dulwich College Beijing (DCB), Keystone Academy, Western Academy of Beijing (WAB), and International School of Beijing are just a couple, but you can check out our yearly beijingkids School Choice Guide for complete listings of other great schools as well.

### Shopping

The Sci-Tech Outlet Mall at Maquanying on line 15 has popular name brands, like Gap and Ralph Lauren. Other malls include Cathay View, Euro Plaza, Pinnacle Plaza, and the recently-opened Shine City, which is doing a great job in bringing the vibe of downtown Beijing shopping to the suburbs to Shunyi. Roundabout is a great place to pick up second-hand toys and home items at a bargain, while their newly opened boutique and community center is a great place to pick up locally sourced crafts, home décor, and organic cosmetics.



Roundabout Boutique

### Dining

Dining options abound, and some places are Shunyi institutions. Here, The Orchard, Green T. House, and Doko can be found providing Shunyi residents with a variety of impressive eats. Other western restaurants and brands include Napa, Annie's, Avocado Tree, Pie Squared, and Dunkin' Donuts. Get over to Mrs. Shanen's for homemade bagels and dishes made with organic produce from the restaurant's farm, Green Cow.

### Where to Play

Shunyi and its environs are rich in kid's activities. For something indoors, Riviera Plaza Mall is another great shopping area with a liberal amount of kid-friendly space sprinkled about. This is a very popular place to not only get some shopping done but to also get your playtime activated. Shine Hills is packed with kids' stores, kid-friendly activities and play areas.

For something more active, jump around and get loose with your kids at Latitude, a state-of-the-art trampoline park. If you have a little Formula 1 racer in the making, then get over to Red1Karting Beijing to satisfy that need for speed. Located north of Shangezhuang subway station, Red1Karting is a pretty swanky affair, featuring karts manufactured by French company Sodikart and other facilities. Crab Island is a massive amusement park that has a lot to offer visiting families. Some highlights include an ecological science park, go-karting, mini zoo, and water park.



Beijing Scitech Premium Outlet Mall



Napa



# Home Away From Home

Check before you rent  
because later is too late

*By Andrew Killeen*

## CHECKLISTS

### Security

- ☐ Windows: bars and grills (on a lower-level apartment)
- ☐ Front door: solid lock
- ☐ Community gate entrance policy (visitors, delivery men)
- ☐ Proper functioning of video and sound on door monitor

### Electrics

- ☐ Functionality of appliances (stove, fridge, hot water heater, air conditioner, washing machine, cable TV, microwave)
- ☐ Number of electrical outlets in every room
- ☐ Phone/broadband jacks
- ☐ Cellphone reception inside the apartment
- ☐ Lighting fixtures for brightness and/or replacement
- ☐ Speed and power of fans
- ☐ Location of fuse box and the electricity meter
- ☐ Location of the radiators

### The Shell

- ☐ Ceiling for signs of leakage
- ☐ Walls: stains or cracks, power outlets
- ☐ Floor: unevenness, cracks, or holes
- ☐ Windows: cross-ventilation, screens, and locks

### Bathroom and Kitchen

- ☐ Cabinet space
- ☐ Location of the main valves (gas and water)
- ☐ Location of meters (gas, electricity, and water)
- ☐ Water pressure and functionality of the showerhead
- ☐ Faucets: sturdiness, leakage, or need replacement?
- ☐ Amount of counter space
- ☐ Drainage speed in all sinks and tubs
- ☐ Toilet: flush, seat replacement?

### Furnishings

- ☐ Amount of storage space
- ☐ Current furniture: space and door requirements
- ☐ Mattress for firmness

### Outside

- ☐ How much natural light does the apartment get?
- ☐ Is the neighborhood noisy?
- ☐ How close is the nearest street?
- ☐ How soundproof is the apartment?
- ☐ Location of garbage cans and recycling bins
- ☐ Location of bike racks



## INFRASTRUCTURE

**What year was this building constructed?**

这个房子是哪一年建的? Zhègè fángzi shì nǎ yī niánjiàn de jiàn de?

**How many square meters?**

有多少平米? Yǒu duōshǎo píngmǐ?

**Which direction is it facing?**

这个房子的朝向是 \_\_\_\_\_? Zhègè fángzi de cháoxiàng shì \_\_\_\_\_?

**How many entry points does this residential compound have?**

这个小区有几个入口? Zhègè xiǎoqū yǒu jǐ gè rùkǒu?

**Have there been problems with insects or vermin?**

这个房子又没有过虫蛀问题? Zhègè fángzi yòu méiyǒuguò chóng zhù wèntí?

**Does this residential compound have round-the-clock security?**

这个小区有24小时的保安吗? Zhègè xiǎoqū yǒu èrshísì xiǎoshí de bǎo'ān ma?

**Does the apartment use community heating or independent heating?**

这里是区域供暖还是按用量计算? Zhèlǐ shì qūyù gōngnuǎn háishì àn yòngliàng jìsuàn?

**Is there hot water in both the kitchen and bathroom? If not, can you have a plumber redo it?**

厨房和卫生间有热水吗? 如果没有, 你可以请人安装吗? Chúfáng hé wèishēngjiān yǒu rèshuǐ ma? Rúguǒ méiyǒu, nǐ kěyǐ qǐng rén ānzhuāng ma?

**Is the hot water available 24 hours?**

热水是24小时的吗? Rèshuǐ shì èrshísì xiǎoshí de ma?

**Is the hot water heater gas or electric?**

热水器是使用煤气还是电? Rèshuǐqì shì shíyòng méiqì háishì diàn?

## LOCATION

**Where's the nearest \_\_\_\_\_?**

最近的\_\_\_\_\_在哪儿? Zuìjìn dī \_\_\_\_\_ zài nǎ'ér?

- subway station 地铁站 dìtiě zhàn
- bus stop 公交车 gōngchē zhàn
- ATM 提款机 tíkuǎnjī
- convenience store 便利店 biànlì diàn
- hospital 医院 yīyuàn
- internet company 网络公司 wǎngluò gōngsī

## LISTEN FOR

**The payment method is ...**

交款方式是... jiāo kuǎn fāngshì shì...

- (1) monthly 月付 yuè fù
  - (2) quarterly 季付 jì fù
  - (3) one month's deposit, three months rent 押一付三 yā yī fù sān
  - (4) half-yearly 半年付 bànnián fù
- deposit 押金 yājīn
  - normal wear and tear 正常磨损 zhèngcháng mósǔn
  - rechargeable card IC 卡 IC kǎ
  - pay at the bank 银行 yínháng
  - meter reader 抄表 chāo biǎo

## MONEY

**How much is the rent?** 房租多少钱? Fángzū duōshǎo qián?

**Who pays the agency fee?** 谁交中介费? Shéijiāo zhōngjiè fèi?

**Who pays the property management fee?** 谁交物业费? Shéijiāo wùyè fèi?

**Where can I pay the gas bill?** 在哪儿能交煤气费? Zài nǎr néng jiāo méiqì fèi?

**Where can I pay the electricity bill?** 在哪儿能交电费? Zài nǎr néng jiāo diàn fèi?

**Where can I pay the water bill?** 在哪儿能交水费? Zài nǎr néng jiāo shuǐ fèi?

**Can I pay by Alipay?** 我可以用支付宝支付吗? Wǒ kěyǐ yòng zhīfù bǎozhī fù ma?

**Can I pay by WeChat?** 我可以用微信付吗? Wǒ kěyǐ yòng wēixìn fù ma?

Whose name is on the phone account? 在电话账户上是谁的名字? Zài diànhuà zhānghù shàng shì shéide míngzì?

**Who pays the heating fee?** 谁交暖气费? Shéijiāo nuǎnqì fèi?

**TV – how many channels? Is the fee included?** 电视有几个频道? 是含在房租以内吗? Diànshì yǒu jǐ gè pín dào? Shì hán zài fángzū yǐnèi ma?

## BUILDING MAINTENANCE

**If this breaks, who is responsible for fixing it?**

如果这个坏了, 谁负责修理? Rúguǒ zhègè huàile, shuí fùzé xiūlǐ?

**Where is the property management office?**

**What's their phone number?**

物业办公室在哪? 电话号码是多少? Wùyè bàngōngshì zài nǎr? Diànhuà hàomǎ shì duōshǎo?

**Can you recommend a \_\_\_\_\_?**

能推荐一个\_\_\_\_? Néng tuījiàn yíge \_\_\_\_?

- handyman 修理工 xiūlǐgōng
- plumber 下水道修理 xiàshuǐdào xiūlǐ
- locksmith 锁匠 suǒjiāng
- electrician 电工 diàngōng

## THE BASICS

**How long ago was the apartment renovated?** 上次装修是什么时候? Shàngcì zhuāngxiū shì shénme shíhou?

**Will you clean it before I move in?** 我搬进来之前你能清理一下吗? Wǒ bānjìnlái zhīqián nǐ néng qīnglǐ yíxià ma?

**Can this room be repainted?** 能粉刷一下这个房间吗? Néng fěnsuā yíxià zhègè fángjiān ma?

**Can I hang things on the walls?** 墙上可以挂装饰品吗? Qiángshàng kěyǐ guà zhuāngshìpǐn ma?

**Can you remove this?** 你能把这个拿走吗? Nǐ néng bǎ zhègè ná zǒu ma?

**Can you buy a \_\_\_\_\_?** 你能买一个\_\_\_\_\_吗? Nǐ néng mǎi yíge \_\_\_\_\_ ma?

**How old is this item? Can it be replaced before I move in?** 这个用了多久了? 我搬进来之前你能换新的吗? Zhègè yòngle duōjiǔle? Wǒ bānjìnlái zhīqián nǐ néng huàn xīn de ma?

**Can you provide more furniture?** 能提供更多家具? Néng tígòng gèng duō jiājù?

**Write it down. Put it in the contract.** 写下来吧。在合同上标出。Xiěxiàlái ba. Zài hétóng shàng biāochū.



# Cover Story

Medical insurance – why you need it, and how to get it

By Andrew Killeen

A trip to the doctor isn't cheap, especially to an international hospital. Healthcare costs can be a nightmare to settle if you're uninsured. In most expat remuneration packages, medical insurance is an attractive benefit. Students are usually covered through their institutions of higher learning, while younger students are included in their parents' insurance.

However, as the profile of Beijing's international community changes, with fewer traditional expats posted here by big companies, and more entrepreneurs paying expenses out of their own pockets, increasing numbers have no insurance at all. They gamble that they will stay healthy, or that they can pay for treatment if it's needed. But it's a risky gamble, particularly for families with children, and if you have a medical emergency, you don't need a financial emergency at the same time.

## Understanding Medical Insurance

Your employer may have an insurance scheme which you can join, or you may need to arrange your own. There are three essential questions to consider:

**1. What do I need?** This includes an assessment of your current health status and family health history.

**2. What do I want?** Dental, optical and maternity care are often separate from the main package.

**3. What can I afford?** This may be the most important consideration, as premium packages offering a full range of care at the best hospitals can run into thousands of dollars.

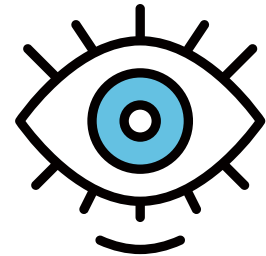
Hospitals require a Guarantee of Payment (GOP) from incoming patients and sometimes the insurance company needs to be notified to ensure that the insured gets the medical coverage they require, and the hospital knows that the bill will be settled. Brokers can act as an intermediary between the insurance company and insured.

## Evaluating Brokers and Insurance Companies

If you need to find your own insurance, a broker can help. Brokers are usually compensated through commissions taken from the premiums charged to policyholders (i.e. you) by the insurance company, so their services are free for clients. Be sure to seek out an advisor who specializes in medical insurance for expats living in China.

Though both brokers and agents act as a bridge between the client and the insurer, an agent usually represents an insurance company like Cigna, Aon, Allianz, Bupa, IMS, or Aetna. Both agents and brokers must be legally licensed to work in China.

If you currently have medical insurance but are looking to change plans, your current insurer would be the most logical place to start. However, the insurance company may not extend coverage to China, or may limit the list of hospitals you can go to. If you're set on going to a particular facility, check the hospital's or clinic's website for a list of insurers they currently have direct billing relationships with.



## Factors to Consider

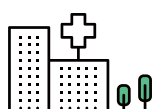
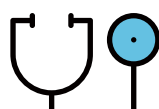
Emergency coverage – including inpatient and emergency evacuation – is perhaps the most important benefit for families. Other considerations include vaccination coverage, outpatient coverage, annual health check coverage, and the hospitals covered by the plan. Here's a quick rundown:

### Annual Limit

An annual limit is the cap on benefits that your insurer will pay in a year. If the dollar amount of covered hospitalizations, treatments, and prescriptions exceeds the annual limit, you'll need to pay all healthcare costs for the rest of the year. Annual limits range from USD 100,000 to several million per year depending on the plan. The higher the limit, the more expensive the premium.

### Annual Rate Increases

Smaller and mid-range insurers with less financial stability usually have more erratic rate increases. Some even increase the premium in response to claims. Larger, more reputable insurers have more gradual increases, both annually and with age.





### Child Coverage

Medical care for children (including checkups and immunizations) is often included, but confirm this with your insurer. Families with older children who may or may not live at home as dependents may be included, but check if there are any age caps and details of the "global" part of "global insurance coverage" if your kids don't live in China.

### Discounts

Some insurers offer a family discount, which can be especially cost-effective for large families. No-claims discounts or first-year discounts are sometimes also offered, but keep in mind that a 10 percent first-year discount carries a 10% + age + annual increase at renewal.

### Maternity Coverage

Couples planning to conceive should note that most insurers require a waiting period of 10-12 months of paid maternity insurance before pregnancy, birth, and/or newborn coverage kick in.

### Medical Evacuation

Evacuation is an essential consideration. Take a moment to think about the cost of out-of-pocket repatriation in case of an emergency. Evacuation would cover transport for essential surgery, medical treatments unavailable here, or a health epidemic. Check whether the plan covers return transportation to Beijing. Insurance for evacuation can be overkill if your primary policy covers most or all possibilities, so make sure it complements rather than overlaps existing coverage. Note that medical evacuation doesn't necessarily cover treatment in your home country or a third location like Hong Kong.

### Outpatient Treatment

Consider how often you or your dependents are likely to visit the doctor in a given year. Policies with high deductibles to minimize the cost of monthly premiums may not be the most cost-effective if you're only planning to see doctor twice a year.

### Pre-Existing Conditions

Some insurers will cover certain pre-existing medical conditions, but the trade-off is a higher premium. Coverage for high blood pressure or cholesterol may seem expensive, but keep in mind you'd also be covered for heart attacks.

### Travel Insurance

International travel goes hand-in-hand with living in Beijing; getting travel insurance is important as a backup on your rider. This is often available as a small package when you have visitors, either through your current insurance plan or through an international hospital or clinic membership. US citizens should note that many global policies don't cover treatment in the US or only cover it for a limited number of days (usually 30-45).

### OTHER

Additional considerations include coverage for children with special needs, deductible and copayment options, dental and visual insurance, coverage for second opinions on major treatments, and emergency protocols (e.g. whether pre-authorization is required).

In addition to health insurance, international hospitals such as Beijing United Family Hospital or primary care clinics such as Raffles Medical have memberships that offer patients additional discounts and extra services for an annual fee. These memberships can supplement company-sponsored insurance packages; they can also be appealing for expats who select packages based on low upfront fees, or those who must pay for treatment out-of-pocket.





**Explore**  
motivated imaginative creative

**Experiment**  
enthusiastic collaborative curious

**Express**  
bilingual clear confident

**Kindergarten:** No.9-1 Jiang Tai Xi Lu(Lido area), Chaoyang District, Beijing 100016  
 幼儿园: 北京市朝阳区将台西路9-1号(四得公园旁)

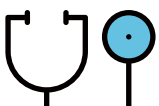
**Elementary:** No.3 Xin Jin Lu, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100102  
 小学: 北京市朝阳区新锦路3号

Tel: (+86)(10)64373344  
[www.3einternationalschool.org](http://www.3einternationalschool.org)





explore experiment express



# Apps to Tap

## Essential apps for surviving Beijing

By Huang Chenkuang

Living in China, it's easy to take for granted how easy life is thanks to the rapidly evolving mobile app market. There's just about an app for everything to help make a life a little bit more convenient. Below is my selection of commonly used apps that provide various services including ordering food, online shopping, and easy to use mandarin dictionaries to guarantee a bit of ease as you settle into your new life in China.



### Alipay

Alipay is one of the two most-used online payment apps—the other is WeChat pay. Almost everything can be paid by Alipay once you get your bank account linked: ordering food, booking train or flight tickets, or paying the electricity bill... It's truly life-changing! Besides this, without Alipay, there is no Taobao.



### Air Matters

Sadly, air pollution is still a problem that haunts Beijing from time to time. As such, getting real-time air quality information from Air Matters becomes a part of the daily routine for people living in the city. This app informs you when to wear a pollution mask as it monitors the PM2.5 concentration in the air at any given moment.



### Sherpa's

Sherpa's provides a food delivery service but only works with top quality restaurants, which means a less wide range of options compared to its Chinese-language counterparts but mainly consists of western-friendly selections. Sherpa's couriers are trained to ensure a quick, courteous, and correct delivery. Currently it is only available in Beijing, Shanghai, and Suzhou. They also have an online website for convenient access.



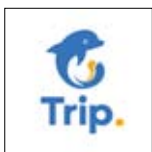
### Pleco Chinese Dictionary

Pleco is probably the best offline Chinese – English dictionary. It integrates dictionaries with an amazing amount (over 110,000) of frequently-updated entries and example sentences with Pinyin, document reader, flashcard system with full screen handwriting input, and live Optical Character Reader (OCR). It also includes audio to help your pronunciation, and displays stroke order diagrams showing you how to draw each character.



### Metro China Subway

Metro China Subway might be the most helpful metro app that provides accurate metro maps and information, route plans that include time and fare information. No network connection needed. It covers most big cities in China such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Nanjing, and Tianjin. As subways grow and become more popular and more convenient to use, this app is a must-have.



### Ctrip

Ctrip is loaded with everything you need for going on a perfect holiday—flight and train tickets, hotel reservations, and even whole holiday packages according to your budget. You can narrow the search results for hotels with handy filters such as price range, city districts, and facilities, and reviews from verified hotel guests will help you make a better choice. For flight bookings, you are also able to find cheap flights by filtering the price, duration, departure, or arrival.



### Dianping

Dianping, which is essentially China's answer to Yelp, offers guides for living and entertainment including restaurants, hotels, cinemas, and bars, through basic information and an interactive comments section. You can check the app for the reviews and recommended specials before you choose a restaurant, helping you and the family to avoid unpleasant surprises. Additionally, paying through the app usually grants you a discount. (Chinese-only)



### XE Currency Converter

All the world's currencies at your fingertips! XE not only provides live exchange rates and charts, you can also set an XE rate alert to monitor your currencies for immediate notification. Live rates are refreshed each minute for every world currency and precious metal. It's necessary especially during times when currencies drop and appreciate often.



# Bracing for Arrival

Moving to Beijing after you start orthodontic treatment

**M**oving to a new city means going back to square one. For many, this means having to find or settle in a place you can call home, figuring out means of transportation, adjusting to local environment, and hunting for a new primary physician and dentist. But what if life takes you to a new destination after you or a family member begins orthodontic treatment? Finding the right doctor in Beijing can be a tiresome task as you want to make sure someone takes care of all the stuff going on in your mouth.

especially for those who have braces -- from wanting to try all that tasty and authentic Chinese food, to trying to socialize with awkward smiles and that noticeable lisp. Thankfully, you now have the option to up your game in Beijing. Ever heard of invisible braces?

IDC Dental is among the first in China to be certified as an Invisalign Provider. This system utilizes the latest computerized technology and three-dimensional modeling to generate a series of clear and see-through aligners. IDC Dental also has the most extensive set-up for Damon system braces, which are self-ligating appliances that do not involve elastic or metal wires.

## Free as a Bird

Considering making your next dental visit with us? You're in luck because IDC Dental offers a free initial orthodontic consultation. And if you're scared of breaking the bank... worry not because IDC Dental's services are made affordable with multi-tiered pricing and flexible payment plans.



IDC Dental  
Scan the QR code for more info. (6538 8111, info@idcdentalbj.com)



## Ting bu dong

The idea of Beijing can be very overwhelming. And the language barrier is mostly, if not always, an expat's concern. The team at IDC Dental boasts communication as one of its major strengths.

Chief Doctor and CEO Dr. Jaclyn Dam-Laute (pictured right) for one speaks fluent English, conversational Mandarin and Vietnamese. Other doctors of IDC Dental speak Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Ukrainian and Japanese.

The team is not only multilingual, but internationally trained as well. This means there is no doubt that what you say will be heard and understood completely as IDC Dental aims to provide specialized care to each patient.

## All About You

It is essential that your doctor knows everything about your medical and dental history. Make sure that you have these documents available to ensure personalized quality care.

Your chosen dentist may also want to discuss your dental history with your previous one. It is worth noting that IDC Dental is happy to communicate with your former dentist. And while patients are assured efficient dental care, IDC Dental also takes pride in providing a more caring and compassionate environment.

## China and the Modern World

It's all about the technology now. And for sure, an expat would want his or her dental clinic equipped with high tech practice. IDC Dental has got you covered in that area too. In 2010, IDC Dental achieved certification to become the first Progressive Orthodontics Clinic in China. Since then, it has aimed to be the first to bring modern western orthodontics to Beijing.

## Invincibly Invisible

Of course, you'd want to get the best out of your Beijing life. And, the struggles are real





## What to Expect When Expecting in Beijing

By Kipp Whittaker

**W**e can imagine what you must be going through upon finding out that you are pregnant for the first time as an expat in a foreign land like Beijing. First of all, we would like to go through some of the advantages of having a baby in Beijing. If there is one thing we've learned by going through this, it's that there are definite benefits in the maternity process that you won't find in other countries (ahem... the USA) along with a massive amount of support and courtesy that goes far beyond just the relinquishing of a seat on public transportation. For instance, you can usually expect at least three months of paid maternity leave during your recovery, most of the time at least two weeks of paternity leave, and even multiple lactation breaks at work to collect milk for your baby. This, along with affordable help after the baby comes, makes that transition after your child's arrival much more manageable. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Let's start from the beginning.

### Getting Started

Chances are if you are reading this with a bun in the oven, or a dumpling in your basket, or whatever metaphor best suits your situation, you have already made an initial consultation to find out if your pregnancy test was indeed accurate.

After you receive this verification, it is time start looking for the hospital which is best suited for your needs. The first factor you need to take into consideration is what you can afford, as this determines whether or not you should be looking at international or local care. We're not going to sugarcoat this for you by claiming that local hospitals are easy, but

it can be done and because having a baby is a very common procedure, these hospitals are more than capable. Despite this, they operate very differently from what we are accustomed to in the west. This, combined with the fact that it isn't very often that you have the luxury of a doctor or staff that speaks English, result in many foreigners going with a pricier international hospital.

That being said these hospitals are pricey for a reason, as many have very comfortable accommodations, decent food, English-speaking staff, and the necessary amount of privacy you would want during your labor

and recovery. In fact, these places are almost designed to look like furnished hotel rooms, with private bathrooms and showers.

Usually, before you decide on which hospital you would like to continue at, there will be a comprehensive tour of the facilities so that you will see exactly what you are paying for. If you want the big day to be at one of these international hospitals but the monthly checkups at a local hospital, to save some money, this is also an option. Below you will find a list of popular hospitals.



**Beijing United Family Hospital**

This is likely the most luxurious option in Beijing's birthing scene. With 20 years of service in Beijing and six other locations in China, they also have Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation, which is a fancy way of saying that they are as good as it gets.

Address: 2 Jiangtai Road, Chaoyang District. 朝阳区将台路2号 (5927 7000)

**Amcare Women's and Children's Specialized Health**

Operating in Beijing for 11 years, this hospital chain focused on women's and children's health currently has branches in four cities and offers excellent, modern facilities. This is a popular option due to the sheer convenience of their services, with three locations in Beijing alone.

Lido Address: 9 Fangyuan Xilu, Chaoyang District. 朝阳区芳园西路9号 (6434 2399)

Yayuncun Address: Bldg 5 Anhui Beili Yiyuan Chaoyang District. 朝阳区朝阳区安慧北里逸园5号楼 (400 100 0016)

Wanliu Address: 7 Wanliu Zhonglu, Haidian District. 海淀区万柳中路7号 (400 100 0016)

**Oasis International Hospital**

First opened in 2012, and located near 798, this is a convenient medical center for families in the Wangjing or Shunyi areas. Also with JCI accreditation, you can expect top-notch modern facilities, with homelike private rooms and delivery suites that offer comfort, safety, and privacy for patients and their guests.

Address: 9 Jiuxianqiao North Road, Chaoyang District. 朝阳区酒仙桥北路9号 (400 876 2747)

**What's in a Package**

The package usually adds up to a total of 13 visits including all of the necessary laboratory tests, consultations, and physical examinations. If you can't afford the full 13, there are also cheaper options consisting of five or ten visits. These consultations and exams usually begin after week 14 and continue in varying degrees of frequency throughout the term.

On every visit, you will receive a series of tests including but not limited to urine and blood analysis, a 15-minute fetal Doppler monitoring session of your baby's heartbeat, and a checkup from a physician, who usually explains some of the findings from your tests. The doctor will also provide prenatal counseling and general healthcare knowledge to make sure that you are making healthy decisions while your baby comes to term. Finally, the climax of your visit will no doubt be the obstetric ultrasound. These will usually take place at every other visit.

One of the most exciting parts of the prenatal process is the discovery of the baby's sex. This is important for many families as it determines everything from the name to the color scheme of the bedroom or wardrobe. This being said, it isn't always possible to gain this knowledge at a public Chinese hospital as it is technically against the law. More often than not for foreign couples at international hospitals, they will make a sly exception, so you can ask a little question like "should we buy pants or dresses," and they will likely let you know. It's kind of fun and sneaky, so we like it. However, at a public hospital they make you sign a waiver that doesn't allow you to know the sex.

Around the 34th week, you will also go through a mandatory birth rehearsal so that you are aware of the process of admitting yourself to the room and making sure that the hospital is ready for your arrival. It is also when they give you one last tour of the facilities so that you aren't freaking out when the time comes to provide the right environment for your loved one in labor and you'll know how and who to call for assistance if needed.

**Not so Laborious Maternity Vocab**

**Finally, we've compiled a list of necessary terms, that will hopefully make things a tad easier in days leading up to and on the big day itself.**

**Birth** – 出生 [chūshēng]

— **birth canal** – 产道 [chǎndào]

— **birth plan** – 分娩计划 [fēnjiǎn jìhuà]

**Breastfeed** – 喂奶 [wèinǎi]

**Breast milk** – 母乳 [mǔrǔ]

**Breast pump** – 吸奶器 [xīnǎiqì]

**Cesarean/C-section** – 剖腹产

[pōufùchǎn] / 剖腹产术 [pōufùchǎn shù]

**Circumcision** – 割礼 [gēlǐ] / 包皮环切

[bāopí huánqiē]

**Crowning** – 儿头初露 [értóu chūlù]

**Deliver (baby) vaginally** – 顺产

[shùnrǎn] / 自己生 [zìjǐ shēng] (common language)

**Doctor** – 医生 [yīshēng] / 大夫 [dàifu]

**Due date** – 预产期 [yùchǎnqī]

**Emergency** – 急诊 [jízhěn]

**Epidural** – 硬膜外麻醉 [yìng mó wài má zuì]

**Exam/check-up** – 检查 [jiǎnchá]

**Fetus** (8 weeks – 40+ weeks) – 胎儿

[tāi'ér]

**Formula (milk supplement)** – 配方奶粉 [pèifāngnǎifěn]

**Give birth (to a child)** – 生孩子 [shēng hái] [háizi]

**Hospital** – 医院 [yīyuàn]

**Morning sickness** – 晨吐 [chéntǔ]

**Movement (of baby)** – 胎动 [tāidòng]

**Natural delivery; no complications** – 顺产 [shùnrǎn]

**Normal** (test result, etc...) – 正常

[zhèngcháng]

**Nurse** – 护士 [hùshi]

**Obstetrical ward/maternity ward** – 产科病房 [chǎnkē bìngfáng]

**Pregnancy test (noun)** – 试孕纸 [shìyùnzhi]

**Pregnancy test (verb)** – 怀孕试验 [huáiyùn shìyàn]

**Pregnant** – 怀孕 [huáiyùn]

**Premature labor** – 早产 [zǎochǎn]

**Ultrasound** – B超 [Bchāo] (common) / 超声波 [chāoshēngbō] (formal)

**Water broke; amniotic fluid/water (to naturally break)** – 羊水破了 [yángshuǐ pòle]

**Share your new arrival!**

Want to see your little one on our New Arrivals page? Scan this QR code and send us your baby photos.

Note that we will only publish photos of babies born in Beijing in the last 12 months



# WHAT I WISH I'D KNOWN BEFORE I MOVED TO BEIJING...

International families share the advice they wish someone had given them!

By Andrew Killeen

A discussion in the office got us wondering what advice international families wish they'd been given before moving to Beijing. So we did what everyone does here when they have a question that needs answering: we took to WeChat and asked in our networks. The responses were many and varied. Here are some of the best.

## "You aren't supposed to flush toilet paper!"

Others reported that they'd been told toilet paper was unavailable here and arrived with a year's supply. Of course, you can buy it in any supermarket, but don't expect to find it in public toilets; it's worth making sure you always have some with you, and wet wipes too. Public toilets can be a shock in other ways: the smell is often strong, even when they're spotlessly clean, and for some older Beijingers defecation is a social activity, not a private one. Elsewhere western-style plumbing is on the increase (though scientific evidence says that squatting is actually better for you.) But in many places you can't flush paper down the toilet, you're expected to put it in a bin at the side.

## "When you first arrive, you'll be a target for scammers. Know the usual cons, and be wary till you've settled in."

Street crime in Beijing is astonishingly rare; you're safer to walk around here, any time of day or night, than almost anywhere in the world. (Though you should always keep your wits about you.) However, there's a couple of well-known scams which are regularly practiced on new arrivals. Beware of any stranger enthusiastically engaging you in conversation, "to improve their English", especially if they suggest you go to a nearby teahouse or restaurant to sample local cuisine. They'll vanish, and you'll be left with a huge bill, and little choice but to pay it. Also, fake RMB 100 notes are rife. Watch for the taxi driver who switches your real bill for his fake one, then complains and makes you pay again. (Fake notes can be avoided by doing as the locals do and paying for everything using your phone.)



"Download WeChat and connect with parenting groups in advance. They are priceless for activity info and advice/help."

"Try to have a bank card as soon as possible (if you want to join a big group in WeChat) in order to have access to expat groups very soon."

See our article on pages 12-16 about how to do this. WeChat limits access to the bigger groups unless you have a bank card linked to your account, so it's worth setting up a local bank account even if you don't expect to use it much.

"Kindergartens and international schools are so expensive, so if you have two or more children... do a good negotiation with your company."

Beijing's schools, though generally offering high standards and amazing facilities, are the second most expensive in the world. Coming with a plan and a budget for your children's education here is essential.

"Unless it was published last week, don't take it for granted that what a guidebook/blog says is fact."

Things move fast in this city: businesses, even buildings, appear and disappear overnight. Magazines and blogs like *beijingkids* can help you find fun things to do, but always double check unless the information is bang up to date.

"If you're shipping stuff over, make sure you fill out the customs forms!"

This can seem like an irritating minor task when you have a hundred other things to think about preparing for your move. But if you don't, expect to have your possessions held up at Customs, to have to make a trip out to the airport to sort the problem out, and to end up paying huge sums of money on import duties (often more than the goods are worth.) Any reputable shipping company should supply you with the forms. As so often in China, just do the paperwork, no matter how pointless and tedious it seems.


"Look in all directions when attempting to cross the road."

Cars generally obey the rules of the road, apart from when they're turning right at red lights and driving up bike lanes. (And pulling out without signaling, changing lanes erratically, or driving slowly down the road with their hazard lights flashing for no apparent reason.) The myriad of other forms of wheeled transport on Beijing's roads though could be coming from any direction, at any speed, in any place on the carriageway or sidewalk, often with the driver more interested in their phone than the road. Be careful out there.

"I wish I'd taken the time to learn more Chinese."

To this, we'd also add: Mandarin is hard for English speakers, especially if you've not been learning it from a young age, so don't beat yourself up if you're not fluent overnight. But while there are plenty of English-language signs and a big community, there's no doubt you'll get a lot more out of your time here if you can chat with the locals and read a few *hanzi* (characters). Find a good teacher, and take HSK tests so you can measure your progress.





**"If you ask directions, don't assume the local is sending you the right way."**

"Face" is still a hugely important concept in Chinese society. If you ask for directions from someone who doesn't know the answer, they might make something up rather than risk looking foolish. Alternatively, they might completely ignore you and walk away. The safest thing is to use your phone to navigate around; that's what the locals do.

**"You can afford to live a lifestyle of kings and queens, there are immense career opportunities if you put yourself out there, and you're almost always welcome with your kids."**

Most of the advice we got was aimed at warning newcomers about potential problems, so we were grateful for this reminder of what's great about this city. Chinese people love kids and expect them to be a part of everyday life. If your kids are visibly foreign, expect them to be fussed over and admired. Rents and school fees might be high here, but things like eating out and domestic help can be very affordable. And Beijing is a place where the pace of change is fast, and the future looks bright. We hope you and your family have the time of your lives here!

**"You may have a list of rights where you live, here you basically have diddly squat."**

Until recently the police turned a blind eye to whatever foreigners got up to, as long as it didn't involve violence or espionage. That's all changed, and laws about drugs and visas are strictly enforced. You can be subject to "punitive detention" without charge or representation, and a Chinese prison is not a place you want to be. However, there have been recent cases of teachers being imprisoned for visa offenses when they had been assured by their schools that everything was above board. We advise you to err on the side of caution, and not to risk any entanglement with the local legal system.

**"Expect bureaucracy: if you get a red stamp it's sorted. Anything else and it isn't."**

A Confucian reverence for process and authority still underpins day to day life in China. If the person who handles your particular issue is not at work on the day you turn up, don't expect that one of their colleagues will help you. You'll just have to come back another day. Get all your paperwork in order, don't question the reason for any of it, and you may be fortunate enough to get a "chop" – an official stamp with red ink which means you have triumphed against the bureaucracy, for one day at least, and come away with a victory.

**"Have at least one good Chinese friend who you'd trust with your life."**

Obviously, it takes time to build up a friendship like this. But if there's someone who can help you with navigating the complexities of life in Beijing, then that can make an enormous difference. Getting things done is very much easier when you have a personal connection – *guanxi* – with someone involved. Many Chinese people will be happy to help you in return for help with their English, but they'll expect you to do favors for them in return. It's impossible to separate business and personal relationships here.



"I did a decent amount of research before moving here but somehow missed that you can't drink tap water."

The authorities insist that tap water is safe to drink, and it may well be when it leaves the purification plant; but most people are skeptical about water supply pipes, and only drink bottled water or invest in a filtration system.

"Don't be offended too easily, when people cut in line, spit/shoot snot/urinate, etc in public. It's how they got accustomed to behave due to the lack of resources they had to overcome in the past."

Beijingers' notoriously poor conduct in public is changing fast. Many of the younger generation would never dream of spitting on the street. For some older locals though, it's a defiant expression of belonging, and they may even make a point of doing it when they see a foreigner passing. So when your taxi driver hawks up some phlegm, rolls down the window, and ejects it onto the road, look the other way and think of fluffy kittens.

"Don't assume that people who've been here for a while know what they are talking about. There are many clueless people living in their own little bubble."

Beijing is so big that most people only really live within a small section of the city, bounded by school, work, shopping mall, and favorite places to have fun. Not all the advice you're given will be helpful, or even true. Use WeChat groups to get a wide range of opinions, and of course, make use of trustworthy resources like beijingkids and the Beijinger.

"Public transport and Didi aren't expensive, so don't worry if you don't have a car here."

In fact, we'd say that very few people will benefit from having a car in Beijing. There are many restrictions on driving within central Beijing, and even so, the traffic is often terrible. The subway is an inexpensive way of getting around, although uncomfortably crowded at peak times, and Didi Dache (an Uber-like ride-hailing service) will provide you with a car and driver to take you more or less anywhere, anytime, at low cost.

"Don't expect China to change for you; be prepared to adapt or stay home."  
"Don't ask 'Why?' more than once a day. You'll drive yourself crazy looking through the lens of your own background trying to make sense of things here."

China is different. That's what makes it exciting, surprising, and fun. It helps though if you can cultivate an attitude of acceptance when dealing with some of the more frustrating aspects of life here. An angry insistence that the western way of doing things is better, is unlikely to help your blood pressure or get things done. Be patient, be respectful, don't put people in an embarrassing position, accept that some things take time, and you'll begin to relax and enjoy your time here.



# Help Is on Hand

Finding and keeping an ayi in Beijing

By Pauline van Hasselt

**R**elatively affordable domestic help is one of the luxuries of expat life in China. Not only do ayis (as nannies and cleaners are known in Beijing) provide invaluable support for any family, their services can be downright liberating for new parents and those with limited mobility. Many families develop a bond with their ayi beyond that of employer and employee; time and time again, long-term expats have told us that the hardest part of leaving Beijing was separating from their ayi.

Beyond domestic chores, ayis can also soften the effects of culture shock by helping families navigate some of the more challenging aspects of living in Beijing: dealing with repairmen, tracking down missing parcels, sourcing hard-to-find ingredients, etc.

While personal drivers are often assigned to executives by their company, ayis will almost always be hired by the family, either directly or through an agency. The interview is a crucial part of the process, so it is a good idea to ask someone to act as a translator so that both you and the prospective ayi are clear about expectations and benefits.

In general, June and December are the best times to look for domestic help because many employment contracts are up around then. The best way to start your search is through word-of-mouth. Finding an ayi with the kinds of qualifications needed to serve an expat family

– the ability to work full-time, cook, clean, take care of children and pets, and perhaps speak basic English – can be difficult, so getting in touch with other parents can save considerable time.

Start by asking around school or parenting-focused WeChat groups and other expat forums (e.g. *the Beijinger*, *beijingkids*, Beijing Mamas, Beijing Exchange). Families leaving Beijing often post advertisements vouching for their ayi while others post on behalf of ayis looking for additional work. These forums are also a valuable source of information on the benchmark for typical working hours, average pay, overtime rates (if any), and the range of duties ayis can be expected to perform.

Online classifieds are also a research avenue, but ads are often posted by ayi recruitment agencies and will require more sifting through. The building and compound management office can sometimes provide leads or recommendations for ayis that residents have employed in the past. Also, ayis themselves often leave advertisements on billboards at businesses often frequented by expats, such as April Gourmet or Jenny Lou's.

Once you have a list of applicants, start by checking their references. Do not hesitate to contact previous employers and ask as many questions as necessary; the ayi will have a significant place in your family's life, so find out exactly what you want to know. Determine



the qualifications that are most important to you and ask about the ayi's experience and performance in these areas. If you need help with childcare, a history of looking after expat kids is a must. If you need someone to do the groceries and cook, a repertoire that goes beyond simple Chinese dishes might also be beneficial.

Once it is time to interview prospective ayis, be candid, clear, and thorough (see below for questions to ask). The interview also provides a good opportunity to see how much English the applicant speaks, if any. It is perfectly reasonable to ask the prospective ayi to go through a trial, such as preparing a meal or cleaning. It is customary to pay the applicant a day rate for any trial; determine the amount with them ahead of time.

### What About Ayi Agencies?

If you are short on time, an ayi agency can significantly simplify the process of finding domestic help, but this requires a careful evaluation of the agency first. Your company may be able to recommend a vetted agency.

However, keep in mind that using an agency will likely be more expensive and possibly carry higher ayi wages, though it is much simpler to change ayis if you are not satisfied with the first one. Agencies usually require a membership or management fee, but the monthly wage should go directly to the ayi. Make sure to clarify how the fees are split between the agency and the ayi. Agency websites are a great resource for pay ranges, which are clearly outlined according to qualifications, language ability, hours and other criteria.

Going through an agency can take some of the guesswork out of the process, with background checks, health checks, and training sometimes included. During the interview stage, use your own translator rather than one provided by the agency. Monthly wages for a full-time, English-speaking ayi range from RMB 5,000-8,000.

### Establishing Expectations

Besides setting expectations for everyday tasks, it is crucial to discuss holiday policies during the interview stage. If you go through an agency, it is possible they have their own policies concerning holiday leave and pay.

### Ayi Training

Invest in your ayi. Our ayi had previous employers that paid for her English classes, and now she reaps the benefits and can charge more an hour for her services. We decided to teach her western cooking so she can take this with her to the next employer when we leave. This will allow her to continuously upgrade her CV as she works for us.

Different ayis have different strengths and experiences. Expect to spend some time showing them what "clean" means to you. At the beginning, demonstrate down to the cleaning product how you would like cleaning tasks to be done, including laundry, ironing, and tidying. If you are interested in a particular posting or referral, contact the candidate immediately; good ayis are always in demand. Remember, if you're happy and your ayi is happy, that's all that really matters. It may take several tries to get it right, but putting in the effort to find and train your ayi will benefit all those concerned.

### Keeping Your Ayi

Consider her workload and pay her accordingly. If you have six kids, make sure to pay her extra, and always make sure she is happy with her position. Be the employee you would want to work for, and don't advertise the fact you have a great ayi to others.

## Ayi Checklist

### Questions to consider when hiring an ayi:

- ☐ Does she speak English? If so, how well?
- ☐ Do you want her to speak English with your children or help them improve their Mandarin?
- ☐ Has she worked for expat families before? If so, were their customs and background similar to yours?
- ☐ Has she undergone a recent health check? If not, you may want to insist she does so, although you would have to cover the cost.
- ☐ Is she certified in CPR and first aid?
- ☐ How old were the children she has cared for in the past?
- ☐ Does she have any experience caring for babies?
- ☐ Is she available for babysitting and/or on weekends?
- ☐ Does she have any experience looking after pets? Does she have any allergies?
- ☐ Do you need her to cook? Do you want her to cook western food?
- ☐ Do you want a live-in ayi? If so, what are her needs and can you accommodate them?
- ☐ Does she live close by? This can affect her availability, should you need her for emergencies or occasional babysitting duties.
- ☐ Do you want a trial period? This can range from three weeks and upwards of three months.
- ☐ Is she trustworthy? Was she referred to you by a friend?
- ☐ If the ayi is to have keys to your house, is she willing to give you a photocopy of her Chinese ID card?
- ☐ What do you want your ayi to do? Be specific about her daily tasks, as well as a list of additional tasks such as looking after the children at birthday parties.
- ☐ Discuss all aspects of money and leave, including pay, overtime, raises, bonuses, holiday leave, and sick leave.
- ☐ How much time will the ayi have off for Spring Festival and other national holidays?
- ☐ Will they receive a guaranteed bonus (often referred to as a "13th-month bonus")? Many ayis will expect this.
- ☐ Will the ayi receive full salary while you are away on vacation?
- ☐ Will you need the ayi to travel with you, including out of the country?

# DON'T PANIC!

Everyday life in a polluted city: one expat's testimony

*By Lise Floris*

**O**ur family arrived in Beijing on an ice cold and grey December morning in 2015. With three children, 15 suitcases and a very unhappy cat. We had barely left the aircraft before we put on our masks. Thanks to our newly acquired air pollution app, we knew that Beijing was going to welcome us with a good deal of smog. The numbers did not lie - but more about them later.

If you're about to move to Beijing, you may have experienced skepticism from your family and friends. In our case, the questions went along the lines of "how can you even consider settling down there? And with children? Beijing of all places. Have you not read about the pollution?" I admit that we were concerned about the air quality aspect - but once you understand the impact (if any) pollution will have on your life in Beijing and become aware of the tools at your disposal, you're set for a good start.

## Tomorrow Is Purple: Run for the Hills!

The air quality is measured in the density of the tiny PM 2.5 particles. On that cold December morning when we first landed in Beijing, the density of PM 2.5 was approximately 300 micrograms per cubic meter. That is six times the value recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

As individuals, there is little we can do about the city's air pollution problem. We can moan about it, look at it from our living room windows, shake our heads. And then have faith in Chinese authorities because after all, they are trying to do something about it.

If you drive a scooter within the city's fourth ring road (there are six

of them in total) it has to be electric. Diesel cars are banned in Beijing and results of the government's "coal to gas" programme are becoming visible. Within the near future, 500 of the most polluting plants will be shut down and 2500 factories will be upgraded. Authorities have also begun to deal with garbage incineration and the burning of wood. This means, among other things, that most outdoor barbecue restaurants in Beijing have been shut down.

But while we're waiting for a long-term improvement, smog is still a reality in Beijing and as residents, we have some tools we can use to address the problem in our everyday lives.



## Things You'll Need

### Masks

As newcomers in Beijing, you are likely to find yourself debating the usefulness of masks when talking to your new friends. Some say they work and some say they don't. There are, however, some very sophisticated and almost completely air tight models on the market and wearing masks certainly cannot harm. My personal advice is to use masks. And when you forget your mask at home, make sure to keep your mouth closed. Studies show that the nose has a natural mechanism to filter dangerous particles and prevent them from entering the lungs.

### Air purifiers

Air purifiers are machines that filter the harmful particles and ensure a better indoor climate. When the pollution is at its worst, all six air purifiers in our apartment run at full blast. And boy are they noisy! They are a bulky and necessary purchase and come in a variety of sizes and prices. Just make sure to check and replace your filter every couple of months (maybe more) to make sure it is still doing its job and not clogged up with PM 2.5.

### Air quality apps

There are tons of them on the market. Apps that tell us what today's Air Quality Index is. In the beginning, I checked my app constantly, but our seventh floor living room window has gradually become our new scale: If we can see the big crane among the skyscrapers in the Central Business District clearly – then the air quality is probably between 50 and 100. If the top of it is covered by smog, we are approaching the 200 mark and if the crane is invisible, it's time to grab those masks and turn the purifiers up a notch.

### Closed windows

Whatever happens: Do not open the windows before you've checked your app.

We wait for blue skies and clean air before we open the windows. Daily ventilation is, alas, a thing of the past.

### Day trips

I would be lying if I said that the air pollution does not affect my mood. Especially when it's the fourth or fifth day in a row with grey and thick air. I tend to organize an excursion or a mini break when it's too much. You do not have to go far to find cleaner air so whether it's for a weekend in a different province or a day trip to the mountains just north of Beijing, day trips are by far my most used mental tool. Directly followed by a huge burger from one of the western joints in Sanlitun.

### The egg

Meet the little gadget that measures the indoor air quality. Far from all Beijing residents invest in an "egg" but in expat circles it is in high demand, and can be a useful tool in making sure the AQI levels indoors are much better than outside.

## Cheer Up – We're Back to Green

Smog is part of our everyday life in Beijing. It is like a heavy cloud in the back of our minds - and on the roof tops of the city. But even when it's at its worst, life goes on. We cycle, we go out and the kids go to school (luckily, most international schools have very advanced air filters). Shops are open, the elderly meet in the parks for taiqi and folk dance, friends gather (indoors or outdoors) and nothing is cancelled. Well except from the training sessions of my husband's running club. They have set the limit for outdoor training at AQI 200.

In our family, we have accepted that bad air is something we have

to live with.

So far, I have luckily succeeded in letting the positive and unique experiences in China outweigh the poor air quality. I may well be going crazy but sometimes it's as if I can hear Beijing whisper to me: "I know, you're feeling down today. Thank you for your patience and here is most beautiful blue sky and an air quality of 30 for you. Go ahead and open those windows". For more of Lise's reflections and stories about everyday life in Beijing, go to her blog [www.ninemillionbicycles.weebly.com](http://www.ninemillionbicycles.weebly.com) or to [www.lisefloris.com](http://www.lisefloris.com)

# SETTLING ACCOUNTS

Managing your money, online and in the real world

By Andrew Killeen



**J**ust a few years ago, conventional wisdom held that China was a cash society. However, that is rapidly changing with the growth of mobile payment platforms like Alipay, Baidu Wallet, and WeChat Wallet. These cashless payment methods are now accepted not only on e-commerce sites, but also the majority of brick-and-mortar stores, supermarkets, and restaurants, and even at streetside food stalls. That said, using them still requires setting up a good old-fashioned domestic bank account.

PHOTOS: NEGATIVE SPACE VIA PEXELS.COM



### Setting Up a Bank Account

Opening a bank account requires only a passport, a proof of address, and a minimal deposit, though you will need to bring a Chinese-speaking friend or colleague since most banks still do not have customer service in English. You'll also need a Chinese mobile phone, which is used to verify your identity across a whole range of services. Be sure to note the details as the bank records them, particularly your name: have they put your surname first? Used your middle name? Put it all in capitals? These details are vitally important when setting up mobile payments (see below).

Unless your employer issues salary payments through a specific bank, it is best to base your choice on convenience. Be sure to open your account at a branch near your home or office since you will need to return to this location to replace lost or stolen cards. If your work involves a lot of domestic travel, consider a bank with ATMs nationwide such as Bank of China or ICBC. Domestic accounts carry a single withdrawal limit of RMB 2,500 and a daily withdrawal limit of RMB 20,000.

Take great care to avoid losing or damaging your card, as it is a hassle to get a new one. The replacement process can take up to a week – or longer if it is a national holiday. It is impossible to withdraw money during the waiting period, even if you present your passport in person to a bank clerk. Many people maintain a second bank account or open another one rather than wait for the replacement card, then wire money from the old account to the new one.

All the "Big Four" banks offer online banking in English: Bank of China (BOC), China Construction Bank (CCB), Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), and Agricultural Bank of China (ABC). Their usability varies, and you may run into problems using your passport number as ID with systems set up for an 18 digit Chinese ID number. The best online and mobile services are probably those of China Merchants Bank, but for everyday purposes, Alipay and WeChat Wallet are far more useful, if not essential. These payment platforms can also be used to make online transactions, find deals, buy movie tickets, pay utilities, give money to friends, and much, much more. See pages 12-16 for our guide to setting up your WeChat Wallet.

### Transferring Money Overseas

The State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) severely restricts the outward flow of renminbi, so it can be difficult for expats to get money out of the country. The limit for overseas transfers is a paltry USD 500 per day for foreigners. Though both foreign and Chinese nationals are limited to USD 50,000 per year for accounts held in RMB, Chinese nationals can wire that amount in one transaction.

If you are an expat working for a foreign company and paying all your taxes, your company should be able to apply on your behalf for a wire transfer of over USD 50,000 without issue. If you do not work for a foreign company, the simplest way to transfer a considerable sum of money overseas is to go through a trusted Chinese friend or colleague. You will need your passport, domestic bank card, the details and address of your foreign bank account, its SWIFT code, and the permanent address tied to that account.

The bank will require you to convert the renminbi to the foreign currency in-house before making the

transfer. Charges vary and include a basic commission fee, plus a small percentage of the amount being transferred (typically 0.01 percent). For reference, Bank of China has a basic commission fee of RMB 80 while China Merchants Bank charges RMB 100.

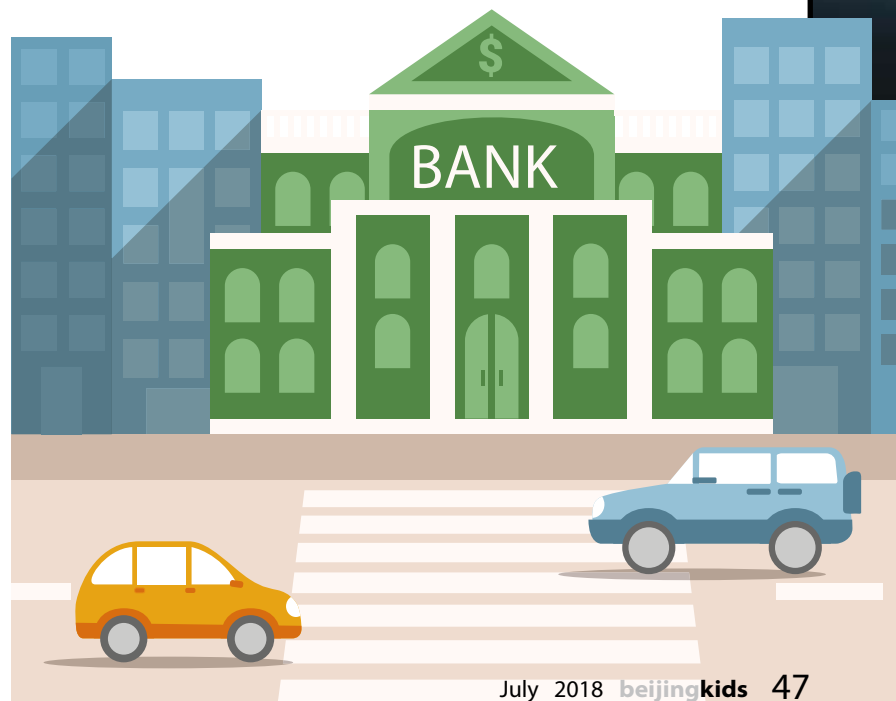
Alternatively, Alipay and the Bank of Shanghai offer an international transfer service that allows Chinese nationals to wire money for a reasonable commission fee. The transfer must be done from a Chinese national's Alipay account, so again, choose someone you trust.

Another option is Western Union, which has higher transfer limits but only allows transfers in USD or EUR. In addition, someone has to receive the money transfer, which means you have to provide their name, address, city, state, country, phone number, and gender. Commission fees vary from USD 15-30 depending on the amount being wired. Western Union counters can be found in selected branches of Agricultural Bank of China, China Construction Bank, China Post, and more. For a list of locations, visit [www.westernunion.cn/en](http://www.westernunion.cn/en) or call 800 820 8668 (press 2 for service in English).

### A Word of Caution

It can be tempting to use illegal methods to move money out of the country, but do not do it – it is simply not worth the risk. When in doubt, retain the services of a tax lawyer who is well-versed in Chinese capital control regulations. Keep in mind that you can carry the equivalent of up to USD 5,000 in cash when flying out of the country; anything between USD 5,000 and 10,000 must be declared and amounts of over USD 10,000 are prohibited.

On a lesser note, beware of fake bills. There is little incentive to turn them in, as banks will usually not replace money lost. As a result, people often try to shift fake bills onto others. For example, some taxi drivers have been known to surreptitiously replace a real RMB 100 bill with a fake one and make a big show of examining the money, only to claim the customer gave them a fake bill. Carry smaller denominations whenever possible and always be aware of your surroundings. Even ATM machines have been known to dispense fake bills, so count your money on the spot and go straight to the bank counter if you spot a fake.



# E-SHOP TILL YOU DROP

By Andy Penafuerte III, Kipp Whittaker

It's quite common nowadays to hear people, and even your newfound pengyou, saying their recent purchases are bought on either Taobao or JD – or other popular online marketplace apps in China. Even if those apps are fully in Chinese, you can actually get over the language barrier by remembering several steps or using clever strategies just like what other well versed expats do.

Online shopping in China is truly distinct, and most of the times a learning experience. But a word of caution: it can be addictive and a real cash drain once you learn the how-to's.

**So first, let's have a quick rundown of the top three online marketplaces you should know.**



**taobao.com**

Available on iOS, Android, and web



**baopals.com**

Available on WeChat and web



**jd.com**

Available on iOS, Android, and web

## What can you buy here?

Everything, well sort of. You can buy items ranging from clothes and accessories to household appliances and electronics. Its sister site TMall, you can buy food items and "higher end" products from licensed sellers.

It can be classified as an English version of Taobao and TMall, so you can buy on Baopals almost all of the items sold from those two sites. Not all of the same search functions exist to find specific goods which makes it time consuming to navigate at times.

It's known for selling quality electronic products and household appliances. You can also buy clothes but the choices are much more limited than that of Taobao's. This can also be conveniently used with WeChat wallet unlike Taobao or TMall.

## How about the prices of the items?

You can find really cheap stuff on Taobao!

Items are priced a little bit higher compared to their Taobao counterparts because of a commission fee.

Item prices are mid-ranged though you can still get discounts or promos.

## Are the items of good quality?

It depends. Some cheap items have defects, but in general you can get good buys even if your Chinese is very limited. Alibaba, the parent company of Taobao and TMall, also began its crackdown on fakes early this year after being recently labeled as a "notorious market" for counterfeiting by the Office of the US Trade Representative.

This is the same as Taobao, because they are essentially the same platform. It helps to be cautious. If it seems too good to be true, then it likely isn't worth purchasing.

Everything, well sort of. You can buy items ranging from clothes and accessories to household appliances and electronics. Many Chinese say items sold on JD.com are durable, with some having warranties included in the price. Its sister site TMall, you can buy food items and "higher end" products from licensed sellers.

## Tell me more about the customer service.

Okay, this gets tricky because expats who don't speak Chinese will find it hard to communicate with Taobao and TMall vendors, rendering transactions very difficult.

There's English speaking customer service so communication won't be that much of a hassle.

With JD.com there is also limited customer service for non-Chinese speakers. If there is a problem with your purchase get help from a friend.

PHOTOS: UNI YOU



## Shop Like a Local

Excluding Baopals, shopping on Taobao and JD involves a learning curve and some tricks. Forget the difficulty of Chinese interfaces and characters; instead embrace them like a local to get that unique shopping experience.

- When buying or searching for an item, better use keywords and translate them first into Chinese using Baidu Translate. Usually, English-named items cost much more.
- Items bought in Beijing can be delivered within two days; those from other Chinese cities take three to five days. Sellers show where the item will come from.
- Use picture search. Look for the picture icons on Taobao (left) and JD.com (right). But remember, this function doesn't work all the time.
- There are review features but they're entirely in Chinese. Alternatively, you can refer to the ratings or photo comments to see how your item of choice looks like. Just look for this word: 有图 (youtu or with photo) or 晒图 (shaitu or blueprint).



## But Here's the Catch...

**Success! Your item will be delivered but you think you'll be in the office by the time the courier arrives at your home.**

Just add your office address as your second shipping address so that your item will be directly sent there. Remember to select that before paying an item.

**"The delivery of my item is taking too long!"**

It could be because of the shipping location or other issues like public holidays, the famous November 11 sales day, and severe pollution (yes, because it affects air freights). You can also track the courier, but remember everything is in Chinese so you need to translate it using an app or asking help from a Chinese pengyou.

**Okay, you bought a cheap quality item and it's ready for shipping ... but you changed your mind and want to replace it with a different colored one, if not, get a refund.**

That's tough because you need to talk to a seller's customer service representatives (CSRs) or fill up a form. Only a few of these CSRs can speak a limited amount of English. What you can

do is to use your translator app... or when they call you, just tell them the following phrases:

• **Sorry, I don't speak Chinese. Can you send me a message instead so that I can translate it?** (对不起, 我不会说中文。你可以给我一个消息, 以便我可以翻译吗? Duìbùqǐ, wǒ bù huì shuō zhōngwén. Nǐ kěyǐ gěi wǒ yīgè xiāoxi, yǐbiàn wǒ kěyǐ fānyì ma?)

• **Hold on, here's a friend to talk with you.** (等一下。这是一个朋友跟你说话。Děng yíxià. Zhè shì yīgè péngyǒu gēn nǐ shuōhuà.)

**"Wow, the delivery was fast..." only to find out the item has defects or different from what you ordered. Worse, you found the item was fake!**

Again, this is a tricky part because you need to contact the vendor. Try sending them a message telling:

• **The item I bought was [fake / has defects]. Can I replace it [or have a refund]?** (我买的物品是[假/有缺陷]。可否更换[或退款]? Wǒ mǎi de wùpǐn shì [jiǎ/yǒu quēxiàn]. Kěfǒu gēnghuàn [huò tuì kuǎn]?)

# RIDE YOUR WAY

What you need to know about Beijing's bustling transport options

By Huang Chenkuang

**T**ransportation in Beijing is convenient and relatively cheap if you can get around the traffic. However, newcomers might shy from hailing taxis on their own due to the language barrier (the prospect of having to speak Mandarin), or a fear of being rejected by a cabbie (due to his fear of having to speak English). Fortunately, ride hailing and rental transport mobile apps have become more commonplace. In this guide, we outline the basics of the most foreigner-friendly private ride-hailing and bike rental apps, as well as tips for a more pleasant subway journey in Beijing.

## 神州专车 (shén zhōu zhuān chē)

Different from Didi, 神州专车 is better known for its car-renting services and long-distance commuting, although it also provides a ride-hailing service like Didi's. It accepts booking in advance; for example, if your flight is landing in three hours, you can book a pick-up via the app according to your schedule. Its renting service means you can rent a car with a professional driver for a specific time period. It can be a lifesaver when you're moving cities with lots of belongings, especially with pets.

### Pros:

- Available any time of the day
- Most of the cars are new, with a secure, clean environment
- All the drivers are qualified professional drivers rather than private drivers
- The privacy of the passengers is protected, since all the registered phone numbers adjust to virtual numbers for the drivers
- You can choose what type of car you'd like to order according to passenger numbers and what type of service you prefer

### Cons:

- Again, communication with drivers might be a hassle especially for foreigners who don't speak Mandarin
- Fees are higher than normal taxis

## Ride Hailing

### 滴滴出行 (dī dī chū xíng)

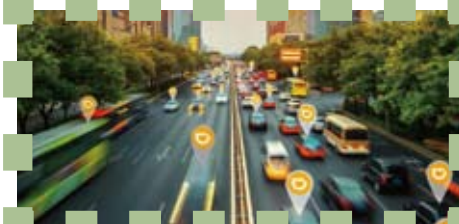
Didi provides a ride-hailing service within and outside China. To book a ride, you need to choose your pick-up and drop-off locations. You can add and save frequent destinations for future rides. Once matched with a driver, you will be able to see information about the driver and the vehicle. You can also check the route your driver takes to pick you up, as well as the driver's estimated time of arrival, and real-time traffic conditions. An in-app messaging feature allows easy communication with your driver. Instant IM translation between English and Chinese is also available when you use the feature. Pay directly through the in-app payment (Alipay, WeChat pay, and credit cards work) feature or in cash (taxi only).

### Pros:

- Integration into WeChat wallet via standalone feature or via Mini Programs
- Most convenient way to order a licensed taxi without having to add a tip
- Easy input of GPS location and addresses
- Several options where you can get vouchers, select professional chauffeurs, or go to a carpool
- Pay via app

### Cons:

- Communication with drivers might be a hassle especially for foreigners who don't speak Mandarin
- Some cars might smell of smoke
- Having to deal with the situation where a Didi driver asks you to give a five-star review which you don't think they deserve
- Extra security measures have been put in place for Didi Hitch after the tragic murder of a customer





**BIKE-SHARING**

Bike-sharing apps have taken Beijing roads by storm, having become one of the most convenient ways to commute in the city. For only a minimal rent, you can just scan a QR code on a bike then go. After two years of fierce competition, currently two bike-sharing companies are leading the market—Mobike and Ofo.

**Mobike and Ofo****Pros:**

- Easy “scan and go” model for a minimum rental price of RMB 1.
- You can leave the bikes at any proper bike parking locations.
- Can be accessed directly through WeChat and Alipay
- You can reserve a bike near your location via the app

**Cons:**

- You need to register on your app of choice and pay a deposit, RMB 199 for Ofo, RMB 299 for Mobike.
- Beginner or occasional bikers just ignore traffic lights and laws
- Many users park bikes in the wrong places, or even lock them up!

**Ride Like a Local**

Besides ride-hailing and bike-sharing, the Beijing Subway might be your best bet for commuting. Even though it gets super crowded during peak hours, it's still a better choice than taking a taxi, with a high risk of traffic jams. That's why Metro China Subway is a godsend. It's a very helpful app which provides an accurate Metro map and information, and route planning including route, time and fare information. No network connection is needed.

Also, when riding buses or taking the subway, you need an — 卡通 (Yíkātōng), a public transportation smart card. Scan the QR code for more on the Yíkātōng card, and on how to ride a bus or take the subway like a local.

**Pros:**

- Easy subway entry and exit for Yíkātōng card holders
- Short waiting times due to the very frequent subway timetable
- No problem with traffic jams!

**Cons:**

- If you need to transfer between lines, the walk can be quite long
- Can get unpleasantly crowded during peak hours

Scan this QR code  
for taxi guides  
and vocabulary





# WHEEL LIFE

## Is Driving Really Worth the Mafan?

By Rebecca Archer

**W**hen we arrived in Beijing four years ago with our two kids and pregnant with the third, my husband and I hadn't given much consideration as to whether we would get a car here. Everyone in Shunyi seemed to drive around in little tuk-tuks and it seemed like that was all you needed because when you live in Shunyi, you tend to stay in Shunyi.

When we realized how far it was to the hospital where I would be giving birth, and imagining my future self giving birth on the side of the road in -20°C trying to hail a taxi (we weren't such proficient Didi users back then), it was quickly decided that my husband would sit his license and we would rent a car for a couple of months.

After studying quite intensively for a couple of weeks, my husband passed the test with

flying colours (thanks to his photographic memory) and we rented our first car in Beijing, but being in late stages of pregnancy with two toddlers in the middle of winter, the car was mostly used for the occasional weekend day trip to the supermarket. It wasn't until a few months after the birth of my son that I began to develop an itch. We had a car sitting outside, and I wasn't allowed to drive it. As I drowned in motherhood responsibilities, I decided it was time to get my license and maybe regain some independence. I downloaded the apps, began studying an hour a day, and a month or two later sat the theory test with my baby strapped to my chest.

We traded in our small car for a larger Jeep, and on that day we packed up the kids and started driving north with no fixed destination. The first sign we saw was for Yanqi Lake, so

that was where we headed. I remember that day so well, the windows wide open, the music up, speeding down the highway on the most beautiful blue sky day. We reached the lake and immediately the aroma of spring flowers and freshly mown grass started filling the car. Pulling up beside the lake, the kids kicked off their shoes and ran around hollering, while mum and dad ambled along behind, filled with the joy that accompanied our newly found freedom.

And so began our adventures exploring regional Beijing. We have climbed many different parts of the Great Wall and discovered many amazing landmarks through sheer luck; we have hiked mountains and camped next to rivers, we've driven to the beach and we've driven to the snow. We have visited caves



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF REBECCA ARCHER, GAMKERASSETS.COM





### How to Get Your Drivers License in China

- You can arrange it yourself, or ask your company/employer to help you, alternatively there are agencies in Beijing who can help you with the entire process for a fee.
- If you have your driver's license (car or motorbike) in your home country, it is a simple process involving a medical exam and a theory examination.
- If you don't have your driver's license already, you need to enroll in Driving School, complete a certain number of hours of driving practice, and pass the practical and theory exams. Foreigners can enroll, however, all classes are conducted in Chinese.
- The theory test uses 100 questions taken from a question bank of 1569 questions. It can be taken in Chinese or English. Other languages are available, but the translations are reportedly very inaccurate.
- You can purchase a Study Book available from the BMVA, but the best way to study for the test is by using an app, such as 'Driving in China.' This is the most popular app, and claims to have all the latest questions for 2018. The key to success is to memorize the answers to the questions. Confusing translations in the theory test can be very misleading, so stick with rote memorization.
- Once you can achieve at least 90% on the exam simulation regularly, then you are ready for the real thing.

### Driver's License Process

1. Go to the Foreign Affairs Department of the Beijing Motor Vehicle Administration (BMVA) to book your examination date. You need to take:
  - Originals and copies of passport (with visa valid for at least 3 months), Visa, Residence Permit (valid beyond 6 months), "Registration Form of Temporary Residence" and your overseas driver's license

- Translation of overseas driver's license (form available at the BMVA and you can do it yourself)
  - Four 1 x 1" photos with white background
  - Driver's Physical Exam Certificate (Ji dòngchē jiàoshì rén shēntǐ tiáojiàn zhèngmíng) from authorized large hospitals in Beijing (forms are available at the hospital, you need to take one passport photo)
  - Driver's License Application Form (available from the BMVA)
2. Return to the BMVA at your appointed time, with your paperwork and sit the computerized exam. You need to pass with 90% or more. If you fail the first time, you can do a re-sit immediately following, but if you fail twice in a row you need to rebook another date to come back.
  3. Your license will take a few days to process, and then you can hit the road!

### Owning or Renting a Car

- Renting – Vehicles can be rented monthly, or simply rent a vehicle for the weekend as you need it. Use an agency or find a private rental by asking around.
- Owning – In order to own a vehicle, you must be allocated your own license registration plate. This plate is yours forever as long as you meet the conditions of ownership. It is non-transferable. The catch is that the Government only issues a certain quota each year, and you need to enter and win the 'Beijing License Plate Lottery.' Given the number of people who are entered in this draw, don't count on winning. For further information, ask around for car owners who are leaving Beijing and are looking to pass on their cars. A word to the wise: do your research and don't take risks.

and boated through gorges, and discovered small villages teeming with culture. We usually just drive, exploring new areas, and we stop at anything interesting that we discover along the way – fruit picking farms, steam train engine playgrounds, river floats, caves, replica ski resort villages, temples, and find things other people have never heard of. Even though we live in the city now, we have kept our car, using it solely in the weekends as our way to retreat out of the city, or to ferry the kids to Saturday football.

I often hear people say 'Oh I could never drive in China, it's too crazy!' and this is where I feel my former life in Nigeria has prepared me to drive here: once you've driven in developing nations, you can drive anywhere. Renting or purchasing a car, organizing insurance and maintenance can be mafan, but driving in China isn't too difficult – you can drive where you want, how you want and as you learn how the traffic flows and how the other drivers think (or don't think), you realize that somehow, like everything in China, you can embrace it and you'll be okay. In fact, you'll be more than okay, as a whole new China experience opens up to you.





# SUSTAINABLE IN THE CITY

## Maintaining a Zero Waste Lifestyle in the Jing

By Rebecca Archer

For many Westerners who have come to China, it's like landing in an alternative universe – where according to the sheer amount of single-use disposable plastic in circulation, there's no fear of climate change or polluted oceans. At meal times, the streets heave with delivery men, bringing cheap, convenient food packaged in plastic. While other countries are banning plastic bags, China is wrapping fruit and vegetables in cling wrap at warp speed.

Thankfully there is a small growing movement in Beijing who are bringing awareness to the issues that overconsumption and convenience are having on our environment, reminding locals and foreigners that the only way forward for our planet is for us to adopt a Zero Waste mindset – that is, we need to stop creating new resources which go from production to the waste heap, and instead create a cycle where new products are made from old.

It may seem daunting to incorporate Zero Waste principles in daily life, because of the perceived 'sacrifice' we need to make, yet, advocates tell us we need to redefine our perception of 'normal' to a lifestyle that is sustainable. Here at *beijingkids* we've done our research on how to live more sustainably in Beijing.

### Home Waste

The first step in your home is to have a separate bin for recyclables, one for non-recyclable items and a separate bin for food waste (to dispose of separately, or alternatively try Indoor Composting).

### Recycling

Most plastics, cardboard, aluminum cans, tins, as well as UHT milk cartons are collected and can be recycled in Beijing. Make sure they are clean, and put them out next to your rubbish bin in a separate box to make it easier for collection. In some housing com-

munities you may see the non-recyclables and recyclables being mixed together - this is okay because they will usually be sorted later. However, this is why it is essential to keep your food waste separated because once recyclables are contaminated with food, they can't be recycled.

### Non-recyclable Items

When you start separating your waste, it is easier to look at your non-recyclable waste and figure out Zero Waste alternatives. If your bin is filled with packaging, think about how you can eliminate it. Beijing has plenty

of wet markets that sell fruit, vegetables, flours, grains, meat, snack foods and even pet food in bulk with no packaging. There are zero waste options for everything, including sanitary products, household cleaners and beauty products. Join a Zero Waste WeChat group for advice.

### Food Waste

Food scraps and food waste make up a large percentage of waste, and if put into landfills, cannot break down properly and causes high levels of methane (23 times as potent as carbon dioxide) which are released, trapping heat within our atmosphere. The best way to dispose of food waste correctly is to compost it. The concept is simple – get a large bucket with a lid, drill some holes in it, and then fill it with your food scraps and torn up cardboard boxes. Eventually you end up with compost that you can then use in a garden or dispose of in your neighbourhood garden. There is a small community of indoor composters here in Beijing, with workshops happening frequently in schools and at different community events. Even better is to work at producing less food waste.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF BULK HOUSE, REBECCA ARCHER



### Sustainable food shopping

While you may find solace in your local Jenny Lou's or April Gourmet, there are other options for filling your family's grocery cart which are much more sustainable. Head to your local fruit and vegetable shop or wet market (tip: watch where the grandparents go), bulk food store or even Carrefour. Invest in a set of organic cotton reusable shopping bags and use your own containers to purchase meat. These places have fruit, veges, grains, flours, dried fruits, tea, snack food and even pet food in bulk, and most places are more than happy to accommodate your requests to use your own bags.

### Eating out waste

Delivery food and eating out are an every day part of life here, so invest in your own set of reusable cutlery, straw and chopsticks that you can keep in your bag and use when you eat out. Remember to refuse that plastic straw when asking for a drink.

Because of the amount of plastic waste that goes into delivery food, think about reducing the amount that you order and look for restaurants that package using compostable or cardboard food packaging, and select the 'no cutlery' option.



Food planning and bulk cooking are essential in fighting the convenience battle, so make sure you plan ahead. If you really can't cook, then it's preferable to eat out instead. If you have a favourite small restaurant in your neighbourhood that you frequent often, you can provide them with reusable containers they can deliver your food in, and then when they bring your food, you can give them another set.

Take your own coffee cup to Starbucks and receive a 3RMB discount, and if you forget your take-out cup, take 10 minutes to sit down and drink out of a ceramic mug instead. It tastes better that way too.

### Water

There's no need to purchase plastic bottled water, since there are fabulous options for good quality water here in Beijing. Aquasana has tried and tested water filters, and there are a range of options on JD.com as well. Invest in a good quality stainless steel water bottle and carry that with you everywhere, topping up from water coolers as you go.

### Goods and clothing

Consumerism is the leading cause of destruction to our beautiful planet, but there are things that we need. Think about buying second hand using apps such as ..... or join one of the many 'Buy and Sell' groups filled with expats who are coming and going. Head to Roundabout, a fabulous second hand store near WAB and Beijing Riveria area which has a lot of furniture, household goods, sports equipment and clothing from expats who couldn't sell it off before they left.

## Zero Waste Food Shopping Resources

**Sanyuanli Market** for dried fruits, tea, meat, fish, grains, nuts, seed snack bars, breads, noodles. Shunyuan Jie (opposite Jingkelong Supermarket, west of Sanyuan Dongqiao), Chaoyang District 朝阳区顺源街(三元东桥往西京客隆超市对面)

**Lishuiqiao Seafood Farmers' Market**  
8 Liqing Road, Chaoyang District (立水桥海鲜大市场) 北京朝阳区立清路8号

**Aoshikai Tongrisheng Grain Shop** for flours, grains, dried fruits, oils, meat, fruit, vegetables. 56 Lama Temple Street, Dongcheng District. 奥士凯同日升粮行(北新桥店) 北京市东城区雍和宫大街56号

**The Bulk House** for household supplies  
24-2 Gulou Dongdajie, Dongcheng. 东城区鼓楼东大街24-2号

## For more

You can connect into the sustainability scene in Beijing by supporting many of the local events and markets such as Farm2Neighbours, Rumble in the Jungle or Live For Less. 'The Bulk House' in Dongzhimen is also a one-stop shop for reusable bags, stainless straws, other items and advice to help you begin to live more sustainably in Beijing. The Bulk House can also help connect you to one of the Zero Waste WeChat groups.



# FOOD AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

## Ordering takeouts the easy way

By Huang Chenkuang

If you're at your wits' end over what to cook, then don't fret, as getting hot, delicious food delivered to your doorstep is very simple. Beijing has several English- and Chinese-based delivery services that simplify your life by giving you one less thing to think about. Here's a list of English-only delivery services that truly deliver.



### English Apps

#### Sherpa's

Sherpa's familiar orange scooters can be seen across the Chaoyang and Dongcheng districts. It has a large selection of partner restaurants such as Home Plate BBQ, Wagas, and Tandoori Kitchen.

**Delivery zones:** Chaoyang and Dongcheng districts

**Delivery fee:** Starts at RMB 15 and increases according to distance. Sherpa's has a happy hour promotion from 1-6pm on weekdays where the delivery fee is waived if the total is RMB 20 or less. There's a minimum delivery amount of RMB 100 at dinner hours starting from 6pm.

**Average delivery time:** 45-50 minutes

**Delivery hours:** Daily 10.30am-10.30pm, closed during major holidays.

**How to order:** Check their app, website at [www.sherpa.com.cn](http://www.sherpa.com.cn), or contact 400 600 6209

#### Youcansong

Youcansong 优餐送 delivers from Chinese and international restaurants. In its own words, Youcansong delivers "the best food with superior service."

**Delivery zones:** Chaoyang and Dongcheng districts

**Delivery fee:** Delivery fee is calculated by the distance from the restaurant to your home. Youcansong charges RMB 15 for the first 3km and RMB 5 for each additional kilometer.

**Average delivery time:** 45-60 minutes

**Delivery hours:** Daily 10.30am to 10.30pm, though delivery hours may vary from restaurant to restaurant.

**How to order and pay:** Online via [www.youcansong.com](http://www.youcansong.com), through the app, or by calling 4000 700 250 or 6500 9155. You can also use cash or POS (China Union Pay cards only) upon delivery.

#### Jinshisong

Jinshisong 锦食送 is one of the larger delivery services for western restaurants. It has international and Chinese selections and covers a wider delivery area than Sherpa's.

**Delivery zones:** Chaoyang, Dongcheng, Xicheng, and Haidian districts

**Delivery fee:** Starts at RMB 15, though many restaurants offer free delivery within 3km. There is a minimum order of RMB 68.

**Average delivery time:** 45 minutes

**Delivery hours:** Daily 10.30am-10.30pm

**How to order and pay:** Check the app, website at [www.jinshisong.com](http://www.jinshisong.com) or contact 400 030 0517. Cash or POS upon delivery, WeChat or Alipay if ordering via the app.



### Chinese-only Apps

**Meituan Waimai** 美团外卖

**Delivery zones:** Across Beijing

**Delivery fee:** This depends on the restaurant but usually doesn't exceed RMB 10. Meituan Waimai also has a minimum price range for food items that can be delivered.

**Average delivery time:** 30-60 minutes, depending on distance

**Delivery hours:** 24-hours for a limited number of restaurants, other opening hours vary by restaurant.

**How to order and pay:** Via the app. You need to pay using Baidu Wallet, Alipay, or WeChat Wallet upon ordering, though some restaurants accept cash on delivery.

**Baidu Waimai**

**Delivery zones:** Across Beijing

**Delivery fee:** Delivery is calculated by distance from the restaurant, but is rarely more than RMB 5-10.

**Average delivery time:** 30-60 minutes, depending on distance.

**Delivery hours:** 24-hours for a limited number of restaurants, other opening hours vary by restaurant.

**How to order and pay:** Via the app or call 1010 5777. You can also use Baidu Wallet, Alipay, WeChat Wallet, or cash on delivery (for some restaurants only).

**Eleme** 饿了么

**Delivery zones:** Across Beijing

**Delivery fee:** Up to RMB 20 (for restaurants) and RMB 30 (for fruit deliveries)

**Average delivery time:** 30-60 minutes, depending on distance

**Delivery hours:** 24-hours for a limited number of restaurants, other opening hours vary by restaurant.

**How to order and pay:** Via app. You need to pay via Baidu Wallet, Alipay, or WeChat Wallet upon ordering, though some restaurants accept cash on delivery



### Standalone Restaurants

Want to try family-friendly restaurants that offer delivery instead? Check out our listings and other dining blogs on [www.beijing-kids.com](http://www.beijing-kids.com).





**Advice for parents whose kids are active in the nightlife**

**Drinking**

Drinking laws are very lax in China, and this definitely adds to some of the risk of letting your teenagers go out dancing or checking out live music around town. Make sure you talk to them about the dangers of alcohol, and that fake alcohol is fairly often served at clubs.

**Drugs**

Make it very clear that if your child is in the same room or at the same party as someone using or selling drugs, they must leave the venue as fast as they can. Being associated with drugs can have very severe consequences in China.

**Stay together**

Encourage your children to stay together and share transportation when they head home. WeChat also makes it extremely convenient for you to stay in touch at all times with your child and even his or her friend's parents.

**Communication**

Enforce some rules around communication. A curfew is a curfew and I personally have very little tolerance for last minute WeChat messages announcing changes to the agreement. However, I do understand that it can take time to find a taxi and that that can sometimes cause delays. Also, if your child goes to a private party, ask for the names/phone numbers of the host's parents.

**Getting around**

Didi is China's very own private taxi service. Didi has been a bit of a logistical life-saver for our family and we find it to be very reliable. Since we live in the city but many of our kids' friends live near the international schools, we just send them back and forth by Didi. Personally, I have been comfortable with using this solution with my youngest since she turned 12.

*My oldest is off to college in the US after the summer. He often says that he'll miss Beijing and I know that he is thankful for having had the possibility not only to explore the city, its tastes and its art – but also to meet its people. Beijing is there to be explored and allowing for teens to thrive by putting your trust in them will make the whole family's China experience even more worthwhile.*

# TEENS ON THE LOOSE

When to let older kids start exploring Beijing

By Lise Floris

Having teenage children can be the beginning of a newfound freedom and independence both for the parents and for the kids. But the thought of letting your teens loose in a city of 25 million people is somehow daunting – especially if you're new to the city.

Teenagers are spoilt for choice in Beijing. There is always something to do. Daytime activities may include checking out the art district, having a picnic at one of the city's beautiful parks, exploring sights, going shopping, or simply having an ice cream with your friends – whereas the fun at night time is likely to go down at private house parties or even at bars and night clubs.

It's difficult to define when is a good age for children to start exploring Beijing on their own but as a mother of three teenagers (18, 16 and 13) I personally found it useful to seek advice from other parents. Class (or year) WeChat groups at your child's school are, for example, an excellent way of consulting others.

However, I quickly realised that my husband and I may be slightly less strict than other parents since our oldest had lived away from home (in another country) already at the age of 14 to attend a music boarding school. He had experienced independence as a young

teen. And in many ways, his siblings are now profiting from the trust we put in their older brother from a rather young age.

Newcomer families will be happy to know that Beijing is a safe city. Like in all big cities, you should never let your guard down completely but most people feel completely safe walking around the city – even in the middle of the night. According to the site safearound, mugging and kidnapping against foreigners are extremely rare, the risk of terrorism is very low, and the murder rate in China overall is less than half of that of the United States. This should ease at least some of your worries that you might have when letting your kids out at night in other cities around the globe.

Kids have completely different interests when it comes to meeting up with friends. But regardless of whether they catch a movie at the cinema, go shopping or go clubbing, you will soon discover that the Sanlitun area tends to be "the place to be." It offers shopping, restaurants, entertainment, and nightlife and most night clubs that cater for the young audience are located around the Worker's Stadium, walking distance from Sanlitun Village. Other clubs and popular bars specializing in live music are located in the Gulou area, near the Drum and Bell towers.



# Living Lawfully

Knowing the laws of your new home and what to do in case of emergencies

By Annie Wang and Kipp Whittaker

**I**gnorance is not bliss when it comes to learning the laws and rights in a new country. Here, we lay out some of the crucial rules that one should know (and not break), the rights that you have as a foreign person residing in Beijing, and other important information that you will need to navigate this city safely and avoiding any unnecessary trouble.

## Laws Foreigners Might Break

### Registration

Foreigners must register their presence with the local police regardless of length of stay in the country. Most hotels will automatically register their guests, while other places might require you to register at a place near where you are staying. If you are moving to a new neighborhood, or just moved in from outside of China, you must register at your local Public Security Bureau within 24 hours of your arrival. Each time you exit and enter the country on a valid visa, you must register within 24 hours at the police station.

### Expired Visas

Staying in China on an expired visa can lead to deportation or being held indefinitely in a foreigners' detention center while your deportation is being arranged. If your visa is about to expire you can apply for an extension at the PSB Exit and Entry Administration Office

### Working on the Wrong Visa

Working on any visa other than the Z or R visas is illegal.

## Know Your Rights

### Maternity and Paternity Leave

Expectant foreign mothers and fathers are permitted a certain number of months of maternity/paternity leave. In 2016, maternity leave increased from 98 days to 128 days. At least 15 days of maternity leave is permitted for pregnancies less than 4 months that were aborted. At least six weeks of maternity leave is permitted for pregnancies that lasted over four months that were aborted or resulted in miscarriage. Mothers on maternity leave will also either receive a maternity leave stipend or their usual salary. Fathers are permitted up to 15 days of paternity leave.

### Marriage Leave

Unfortunately, the seven-day marriage leave that was once afforded to new couples was taken down in 2016. New couples are no longer permitted this seven-day leave, and companies that still award this do so out of tradition.

### Pre-natal Checkups

Beginning at 12-weeks, pregnant workers are entitled to paid leave for these checkups. The checkups will also be noted in a pregnancy handbook given by the local Community Health Service Center. As with maternity leave, these policies can differ across China so be sure to look at the policy specific to your location.

### Breastfeeding

Female employees are permitted one hour of breastfeeding time during every working day for a one-year breastfeeding period. It is also common practice for employers to ask women to work the usual eight-hour workday and accumulate the one hour towards their vacation time. Women are also permitted to breastfeed in public without covering up.

### Terminating Contracts of Pregnant Workers

It is illegal to terminate the contract of a pregnant worker during her pregnancy, maternity leave, or breastfeeding period (lasts until the infant is one years old). If a worker becomes pregnant during her contract and that contract ends during her pregnancy, the contract will be automatically extended until the end of the breastfeeding period.

### Withdrawing Social Security Upon Leaving

All foreign workers are required to contribute to social security in China. If you contributed to a pension/social security fund in China for 15 years or more, you qualify for social security benefits. Foreigners that leave China before this 15-year period has been reached are entitled to recoup the money they had contributed to social security during their employment time. In order to begin the process of withdrawing money, you must first be officially terminated from your place of employment in China. Following the termination, you should speak with your company about the appropriate procedures.

### Lease Termination

A landlord that wishes to prematurely terminate the lease agreement must pay double the down-payment (usually one month's rent) and double the security deposit (usually two to three month's rent). This is roughly eight-months of rent. Tenants that prematurely terminate the lease agreement forfeit both the down-payment and the security deposit.

## In Case of Emergencies

### Theft/Missing Persons

Thefts can be more common than one would like in Beijing. Below are some of the commonly seized items and what to do post-theft.

### Passports

If you lose your passport, report the theft at both the police station and the division of Exit/Entry Administration at the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau or at the exit-entry department of the public security bureau branch nearest to where the passport was lost. A new passport can be acquired at your embassy or consulate using the Confirmation of Passport Loss document. Don't forget to apply for a new visa!

### Stolen Property

In the event that your property is stolen, call the police at 110 and report the theft immediately. Then wait for the police to arrive and cooperate with them, which may include going to the station.

### Missing Persons

A missing persons' report can be filed 48 hours after that persons' disappearance. The report can be filed both at your country's embassy location in Beijing or at the local police department.

### Embassies

You should locate the embassy nearest to your residence before arriving, and keep their contact information with you. Embassies often send out alerts or other important information that their citizens should know about while in Beijing. At the embassy, you can file a missing person's report and vote in your home country's elections.

## Emergency Numbers

**Fire:** 119

**Police (Phone):** 110

**Police (Text):** 12110

**Police (English emergency hotline):** 6525 5486

**Ambulance (Chinese):** 120

**Ambulance (English)** 999

**Traffic Accidents:** 122

**Foreign Emergency Services:** 6525 5486

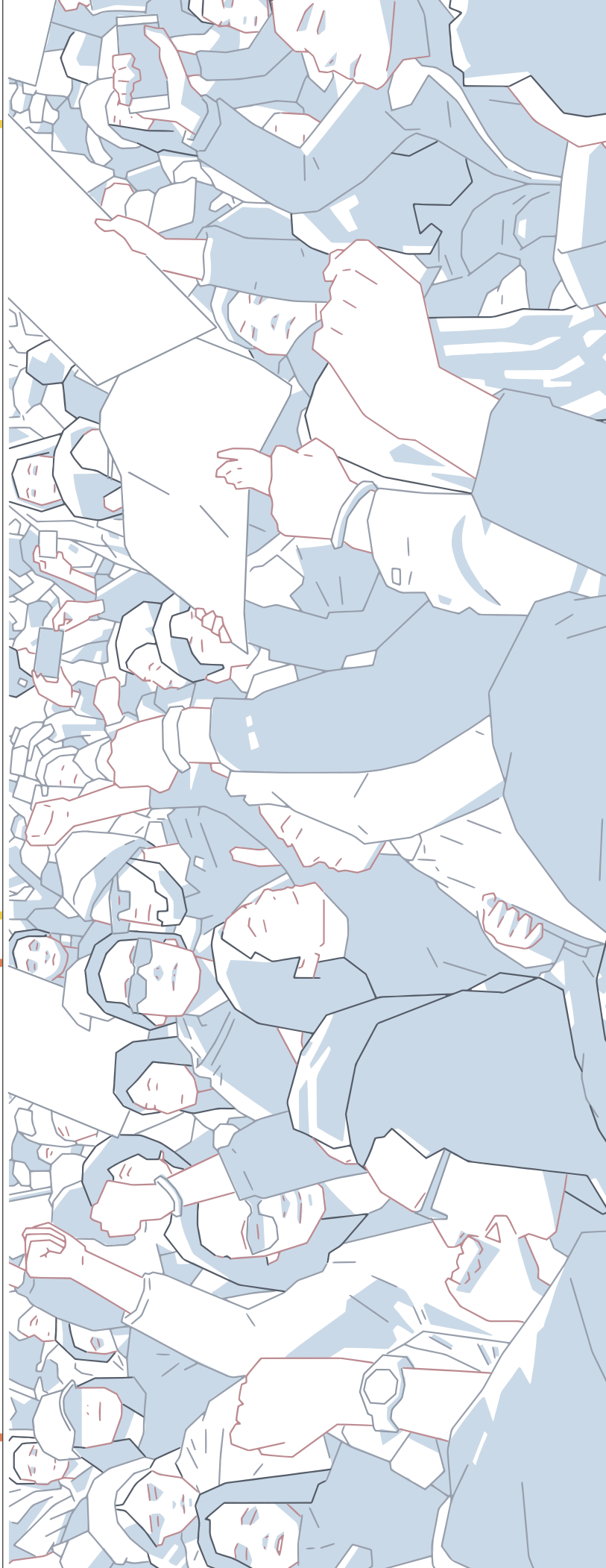
**Chaoyang District Center for Disease Control and Prevention:** 6777 3512

**Beijing United Family Hospital Emergency Services:** 5927 7120

**Raffles International Clinic and Emergency Services:** 6462 9112

**Raffles International Assistance Center:** 6462 9100

Source: *the Beijinger*







# EXIT STRATEGY

Tips to make your big move hassle-free

*By Andy Penafuerte III*

**"A**fter death and divorce, moving house is the third most stressful life event," so goes the cliché. With a little help, your move doesn't have to be a source of stress and worry, but it's important to be informed.

As temporary residents in Beijing, it's highly likely that we will relocate a couple of times in our stay here – be it transferring to a new house after your current lease expires, or moving out of the city or country for good. Relocating isn't a breeze, to be honest, especially if you consider the number of items you've accumulated over the months or years. Our team has talked about our experiences of moving out (more that on [www.beijing-kids.com](http://www.beijing-kids.com)), and here's what we think would help you when you make the big move, either transferring to a new accommodation or entirely saying goodbye to Beijing.

- **Planning way in advance.** Either you're just moving out to a new flat or leaving for good, you'll know the definite answer at least three months before it happens. By that time, it is important that you start planning an exit strategy, such as making a calendar or to-do lists, coordinating with relocation companies, doing a relocation budget, and selling or donating unwanted items.
- **Need help?** Ask yourself if you can go it alone. But most likely you'll need help, especially when intricate Chinese paperwork is required, or talking to local movers, or when authorities implement new regulations. At the very minimum, your company HR staff should be able to help you talk to locals. But if you need experts, you can always go to relocation management companies (see below).
- **Do you need everything when you move out?** Sure, you have stuff that made your house liveable and your closet changes every season. But remember: packing these items will be a major headache when you need to relocate. Also remember: you can donate unwanted items to charity enterprises like Roundabout or sell clothes and other furniture in several WeChat groups.
- **What if problems arise,** such as broken doorknobs and toilet leaks (when you're transferring to a new house) to difficulties in exporting items like wrong quotes, missing items, delayed shipments, and the like (when moving out of the country)? Check and prepare all the documents and contracts you have, since most of these issues should be covered under those agreements.
- **Always ask and seek advice.** We've mentioned in our WeChat guide that there are community groups which specialize in different areas of living in Beijing. You'll be surprised at how many expats are willing to help you connect to the right people or companies if you need more information for your relocation.

## Relocation Resources

**Allied Pickfords** offers moving services, with a move coordinator to assist throughout the process from door-to-door. (5870 1133, [www.alliedpickfords.com.cn](http://www.alliedpickfords.com.cn))

**Asian Express International Movers** has a website that shows customs tips for various destinations, an import duty calculator, insurance forms, and more. (8580 1471, [www.aemovers.com.hk](http://www.aemovers.com.hk))

**Asian Tigers Mobility** is a leading provider of international move management and relocation solutions that also provides tenancy management and settling services (6415 1188, [china@asiantigers-mobility.com](mailto:china@asiantigers-mobility.com), [www.asiantigers-mobility.com](http://www.asiantigers-mobility.com))

**Crown Relocations Beijing** offers domestic and international transportation of household goods, home and school search, storage, expense management, policy consulting and program administration, online tracking tools, transit protection, and intercultural services. (5801 8088, [beijing@crownrelo.com](mailto:beijing@crownrelo.com), [www.crownrelo.com](http://www.crownrelo.com))

**Links Moving Beijing** has a full range of moving services and storage options and provides online quotes for smaller shipments. (8447 7496, [www.linksmoving.asia](http://www.linksmoving.asia))

**Santa Fe Relocation Services Beijing** offers moving, relocation, real estate and visa and immigration services for individuals and companies moving to China and around the world. (6947 0688, [beijing@santaferelo.com](mailto:beijing@santaferelo.com), [www.santaferelo.com](http://www.santaferelo.com))

# Animals Embarking

## Make the move with your beloved pets

By Andy Penafuerte III

**M**any expats wouldn't dream of moving without knowing that their beloved family pet could go with them, but the logistics and paperwork involved in relocating an animal to or from Beijing – coupled with the potential language barrier – are enough to worry even the most efficient planner. Many hire a pet relocation company, but whether you choose to outsource the process or go it alone, rest assured that relocating with pets can be straightforward with research and preparation. With help from the International Center for Veterinary Services (ICVS), we summarize the latest regulations and procedures.



**Exiting China**  
(for Beijing-based owners)



**Bringing into China**

According to ICVS, there are two sets of processes: one for when exiting China with pets and another for rehoming animals. The timeline below shows a summary of the things to do for both actions as early as a year before the departure date.

### Rehoming Your Pets

Begin the process of finding a new home for your pet as early as possible. Even starting a year in advance is not too soon, because waiting until the last few weeks or months before departure creates panic and desperation for many pet owners. See more resources about rehoming and adoption on our website.



### Territories with strict quarantine controls

Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Singapore and other strict quarantine controls require import permits and EU ISO compliant microchips and rabies antibody titre tests.

As early as possible

12 months to at least 30 days before departure

8-12 months before departure

6 months before departure



### Vaccinations and immunity certificate

Animals departing China must be rabies vaccinated at an officially designated animal rabies vaccination hospital in China and must have the official "PRC (Beijing) Animal Health and Immunity Certificate." (e.g., vaccination red book) with the stamp/chop of the issuing hospital. Dogs must also have an A4 paper rabies vaccination certificate from the pet hospital. Owners are also recommended to keep good records of the pet's local vaccinations upon adoption or arrival in Beijing.



### Moving to EU countries and the UAE

Require EU ISO compliant microchips, rabies vaccination, rabies antibody titre testing (RATT) and at least 90-days waiting period from date of the blood draw for the RATT before pets may enter these countries.

### Moving to continental US, Canada

In a nutshell, these areas require pets to have rabies vaccination, deworming and parasite prevention. Beijing Customs and Quarantine Bureau requires all pets to have microchips in order to depart China.



## Pet Relocation Resources

**International Center for Veterinary Services (ICVS)** is a professionally managed and affordable full service, bilingual animal hospital and pet care facility. ICVS provides spay/neuter, hospitalization, boarding, and grooming and has a pet import and export service center. Open 9am-6pm daily and Wednesdays 9am-8pm. No. 13-16 Rongke Ganlan Cheng Shang Jie, Futongxi Dajie, Wangjing, Chaoyang District | 朝阳区望京阜通西大街, 融科橄榄城商业街13-16号 (8456 1939/40, reception@ICVSASIA.com, www.ICVSASIA.com)

**Doctors Beck and Stone Health Care Center** is a chain of animal hospitals staffed with Western and Chinese veterinarians, nurses, and medical technicians. Branches double as emergency centers, with ambulances available for the transportation of pets. For a full list of locations, visit [www.doctorsbeckandstone.com](http://www.doctorsbeckandstone.com).

**Globy Pet Relocation** helps relocate pets from anywhere in the world, including planning, obtaining required papers, arranging flights, and delivering pets. Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm. Rm 26B, Block 2, Bauhinia Court, 30 Dongsanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang District 朝阳区东三环北路30号紫荆豪庭2座26B (8762 5020, [beijing@globypetrelo.com](mailto:beijing@globypetrelo.com), [www.globypetrelo.com](http://www.globypetrelo.com))

**Beijing Guanshang Animal Hospital** is open daily 8.30am-10.30pm. Its 24hr emergency services are available after 5pm (including holidays). 7 Beisanhuan Zhonglu, Xicheng District 西城区北三环中路7号 (6237 1359, Chinese only: 6204 9631/9742, [yuanzhang@chinapet.com.cn](mailto:yuanzhang@chinapet.com.cn), [www.chinapet.com.cn](http://www.chinapet.com.cn))

### **Mandatory exit health-examination to obtain an official Exit Health Certificate**

After your pets have completed rabies and all other vaccinations and have obtained the official "vaccination red books," pet owners may take their pets for the official exit health examination at the designated government Customs and Quarantine Bureau animal hospital, Guan Shang, 10-12 days prior to the animal's departure date from China.

Owners should bring the pet, the vaccination red book, passport or photocopy (one passport per pet), A4 paper rabies vaccination certificate (for dogs only), rabies antibody titre test report (for EU and other countries that require the test) and cash (about RMB 1,200+ per pet) at the time of the visit.

No more than 12 days  
before departure

After completing the exit health  
examination and receiving  
the official health report

Bringing a pet  
into China

### **Animal Exit Permit**

Owners may present the official health report to apply for the "International Exit Health Certificate" and the "Animal Exit Permit." Bring your "vaccination red book," the official health report, the A4 paper rabies vaccination certificate (for dogs only), rabies antibody titre test report, and your passport (or passport photocopy), and RMB 200 (exit permit fee) to the Customs and Quarantine Bureau. Pets going to the EU must be present to have microchips scanned in order to apply for the exit permit. The exit permit is usually processed within 4-6 business days and is valid for 14 days once issued. Once you receive the exit permit, pet owners should arrive at your destination countries within 10 days of the issue date.

### **Requirements**

- **A work visa.** Each passport is limited to one pet.
- **Proof of a recent rabies vaccination.** The vaccine must have been administered at least 30 days but no more than 12 months before entry. These guidelines are subject to change at any time, so double-check with ICVS or your relocation company as soon as you know that you're moving to Beijing.
- **An official certificate to export your pet from your country of origin.** Every country has different regulations. Usually, it's the Agriculture or Quarantine Bureau or an equivalent government agency that oversees the import and export of animals.
- **A health certificate** issued by a government authorized veterinarian in your country of origin attesting to the health of your pet.



Artwork provided by Beijing New Talent Academy, Cui Yuan, Grade 8 (drawn in Grade 6), first published in JingKids April 2015 issue.



# Family Favorites: The Killeen Clan

Text by Kipp Whittaker, Photography by Uni You

It is with great sorrow that *beijingkids* says goodbye to the Killeen clan. It was three years ago when parents Andy and Karen, and their sons Noah (12) and Joseph (9) made the move to Beijing from their home in Birmingham, UK. While Karen has been an educator, making her mark at both Yew Ching International School of Beijing and Hyde Academy, you may know Andy as our quick-witted columnist, expounding about many important topics and helping many newcomers gain their bearings in this chaotic metropolis. While this family may be moving on to the greener pastures of Ningbo, we can assure that their stories, good and bad, will continue being featured on the pages and in the blog of *beijingkids* for the foreseeable future. Safe travels Andy, Karen, Noah, and Joseph!

## Favorite Way to Transport Your Family around the City

We cycle when we can, but subway and Didi are the only ways for us to get downtown from Shunyi.

## Favorite Weekend Activity

Cheering on the boys' football teams, and playing board games.

## Favorite Chinese Restaurant

Xinjiang cuisine from Baron Rozi on Gongti Beilu. But we also like Dayali for affordable duck, and there's a little cafe round the corner which does awesome *bianbiangmian*.

## Family Rituals

Homemade steak and chips on a Saturday night, then Doctor Who, all of us on the couch with our Dalek-repelling cushions in case it gets scary.

## Favorite non-Chinese Restaurant

We've just discovered the English Tearooms at Shine Hills for fried breakfasts and fish and chips.

## Favorite Museum

The Red Brick Museum has beautiful grounds and amazing exhibitions.

## Favorite Day Trip

The Water Cube, for the slides.

## Favorite Parents Date Night

Ernest's Bistro, when we want to treat ourselves.

## Favorite neighborhood

We liked living in Chaoyang better than Shunyi, but for hanging around we like Caochangdi.







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**[www.britishschoolbeijing.com](http://www.britishschoolbeijing.com)**

**Sanlitun - Downtown Location (Ages 1 to 11)**

No. 5 Xiliujie, Sanlitun Road +86 10 8532 3088  
Chaoyang District, Beijing, 100027 [sltadmissions@bsbsanlitun.com](mailto:sltadmissions@bsbsanlitun.com)

**Shunyi - Expat Community Location (Ages 2 to 18)**

South Side, No. 9 An Hua Street +86 10 8047 3558  
Shunyi District, Beijing, 101318 [admissions@bsbshunyi.com](mailto:admissions@bsbshunyi.com)



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