



ĀMAN  
AT  
SUMMER PALACE, BEIJING  
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**GEOGRAPHY** — Beijing is one of six provinces in the north of China that also includes Hebei, Tianjin, Shanxi, Shandong and Henan. Beijing Municipality is centered between Tianjin City on its eastern border and Hebei Province to the west. Lying in the northern part of the North China Plain, Beijing is surrounded by mountains on three sides. Topographically, the north-eastern area of the city is high while the south-western part is low, and the south-eastern plain tilts gradually to the Bohai Sea.

**BEIJING** — Beijing (北京) literally means “northern capital” and is recognised as the political, educational, and cultural centre of the People’s Republic of China. Beijing is one of the world’s oldest cities dating back to the first millennium BC. It has been rebuilt several times throughout China’s dynastic history. Today this renewal continues apace. A visit to Beijing offers travellers a kaleidoscope of Old and New. With the Forbidden City at its core, Beijing expands in concentric rings echoing a blueprint from the Ming Dynasty. Old Beijing is found in the temples, palaces and narrow alleyways within the city’s second ring road, the original site of the long-demolished city walls. Around this historic centre, the modern city is a living showcase of contemporary China. Skyscrapers reach for the heavens and the city’s rich culture is celebrated with the wealth of cultural and entertainment options available, from traditional opera to fine dining on regional and international cuisine.

**LOCATION** — Northwest of Beijing’s core, only 15 kilometres from the Forbidden City, lies a tranquil retreat adjacent to the East Gate of the Summer Palace. **Aman at Summer Palace, Beijing** is housed in a series of dwellings dating back over a century. The original complex was used by guests of the Palace awaiting an audience with the Empress Dowager Cixi. Rooms and suites reflect traditional Chinese architecture and celebrate the courtyard style of the Summer Palace with a dignified ambience throughout. Whilst every modern comfort has been provided for, the design embraces traditional layouts, materials and fabrics. The property has a variety of dining options, a luxurious Spa and a range of recreational facilities.



**HISTORY** — Built in 1750, the Summer Palace is a beautiful garden estate dotted with palaces around contemplative Kunming Lake. It long served the Qing Dynasty as an imperial retreat for escaping the summer heat of the Forbidden City. It was during the reign of Emperor Qianlong (1736–1795) that the Summer Palace was first designed and built, but the Empress Dowager Cixi had the most influence on the Palace as we know it today who had it rebuilt after it was destroyed by Allied Forces in 1860. Today the Summer Palace covers some 290 hectares encompassing a variety of palaces, gardens and other classical architectural structures, and is considered a must-see site for visitors to Beijing.

**ACCOMMODATION** — Aman at Summer Palace, Beijing offers a variety of accommodations. Suites surround an internal courtyard crisscrossed by stately pathways separating formal gardens and shaded by established trees. Aesthetic references draw upon traditional materials, and furniture and accessories draw on the region and Imperial period. Floors are finished in Jin clay tiles polished to a deep lustre, and ceilings are mostly open to exposed wood roof beams and structural columns.

There are eight **Guestrooms** and 10 **Courtyard Guestrooms**, most of which feature king-size beds and Ming-style armoires. The 25 spacious **Suites** also showcase furniture inspired by the Ming Dynasty, and while some have a combined bedroom and living area, others have separate bedrooms. All feature king-size beds, daybeds, reading chairs and writing desks. The seven **Courtyard Suites** are identical in design to the Suites but even more spacious. Every room has its own unique layout and orientation with roomy bathrooms featuring island bathtubs and separate shower and toilet areas. **The Imperial Suite** comprises three separate dwellings: the private dwelling, the living/study dwelling and the formal dwelling. The private dwelling is the dominant structure within The Imperial Suite and is composed of a living area, a private dining area and a spa treatment room set around a private courtyard. Adjacent to the reception room, which can be used for private meals, is a lounge featuring a series of drum stools, a *tah* bench and



coffee table. The bathroom has a bathtub and two separate spaces with a dressing area in between. Each space contains a shower, toilet and dresser. The living/study area is located along the western side of the private courtyard. The formal dwelling is a boardroom-style meeting room with seating for eighteen people. This can also be used for private meals. Simple, elegant and redolent of the past, rooms and suites also feature traditional wooden screens and bamboo blinds, creating a mysterious sense of peeking through the veil of time to the romance of another era.

**DINING** — In the reception of the main building sits **The Lounge**. Relaxed seating extends to a lower level overlooking a traditional courtyard featuring indigenous trees. The Lounge is open all day and serves Continental breakfasts and light meals. In the afternoon, a choice of savouries, cakes and pastries is served accompanied by live music. Courtyard restaurants consist of two elegant dining rooms surrounding a central area featuring a tranquil reflecting pond. Each dining room is dedicated to a different cuisine. In **Naoki**, Chef Naoki Okumura serves original French *Kaiseki* fare which combines the best of French technique with a Japanese sense of artistry. Chefs cook in front of guests who are seated around a Japanese counter. Naoki is open for lunch and dinner. **The Grill** serves Western fare, specialising in grilled-to-order selections of prime cuts of meats and fresh seafood. The Grill is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Both dining rooms are furnished using classic pieces of Ming Dynasty-inspired furniture. The Chinese Restaurant serves Peking duck and several imperial dishes, along with traditional Cantonese cuisine. The restaurant consists of nine different rooms; three large rooms for the public and six intimate rooms for private dining. **The Chinese Restaurant** is open for lunch and dinner. **The Bar** overlooks a peaceful pond and garden. This is a quiet, private setting with relaxed seating. Within the bar area is a **Cigar Room** offering a wide selection of premium cigars. Beyond the pond is a **Music Pavilion** where musicians perform in the afternoon and evening on warm days.



**THE SPA** has nine self-contained double treatment rooms, a dedicated Pilates/yoga studio and a beauty and hair salon.

**FITNESS FACILITIES** include a 25-metre indoor lap pool, a 300-square metre fitness room with Technogym equipment (including Kinesis), two squash courts and a juice bar. Fitness consultants are on hand to offer personal training.

**THE LIBRARY** includes a selection of books on various subjects in several languages. Wireless internet access is available. A Chinese calligrapher is also on hand various days of the week.

**THE THEATRE** features 37 reclining leather seats and a 21-square metre screen, which can be used for movies, live television broadcasts, live theatre or business presentations.

**THE BOUTIQUE** offers a variety of unique Chinese artifacts and Summer Palace-related souvenirs.

**CULTURAL EXPERIENCES** — Adjacent to the resort's grounds is the beautiful **Summer Palace**. The site contains an archetypal Chinese garden and is ranked amongst the most noted classical gardens in the world. In 1998, the Summer Palace was listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The artists involved in the property's creation over the years allowed themselves to be guided by nature, and today visitors never cease to be amazed by incredible views, delicate architecture and detailed workmanship. Built around the 'Tower of Buddhist Incense' (Foxiangge), the Summer Palace consists of over 3,000 structures including pavilions, towers, bridges and corridors.

**The Forbidden City** is located in the very heart of Beijing. Completed in 1420, it is revered as China's most magnificent architectural creation. This vast palace is a compendium of Imperial architecture and a lasting monument to dynastic China from which 24 emperors ruled for nearly 500 years. Just to the south of the Forbidden City is **Tiananmen Square**, the square of The Gate of Heavenly Peace.

Here is a vast open expanse with Mao's mausoleum as its focal point. This city square of unprecedented grandeur is bordered by 1950's Communist-style buildings and ancient gates from old Beijing's now-levelled city walls. One of the most frequented sites in China is **The Great Wall**. It grew to its great length from just a few earthen ramparts after the unification of China under Qin Shi Huangdi in 220 BC. The wall stood for centuries but was breached in the 1300's by the Mongols, and later in the 17th century by the Manchu. Today, sections of its crumbling remains have been restored so that the Wall can be experienced on a day trip from Beijing. Within Beijing are a number of smaller but no less impressive historic sites such as **The Temple of Heaven**, **Lama Temple** and **Fayuan Si Temple**. There are also many museums and art galleries including the **Beijing Natural History Museum**, **The National Art Museum** and the **South-East Corner Watchtower**.



Atmospheric *hutongs* found throughout Beijing are particularly renowned. *Hutongs* are narrow alleys formed by lines of *siheyuan* — traditional courtyard residences. Beijing's *hutongs* are protected as part of the country's national heritage, and provide visitors with a glimpse of a bygone era. Beijing is also a treasure trove of contemporary Chinese art. **798 Art Zone**, a Soviet-designed former weapons factory, has been transformed into a centre for local modern art and fashion. Regular exhibitions, as well as studios where artists work and display their works, offer travellers an insight into the artistic landscape of China today.

**GETTING THERE** — Beijing Capital International Airport is one of the main international airports for flights arriving to and departing from China. Most international carriers from Europe, the USA and Asia provide services to and from Beijing. Aman at Summer Palace, Beijing is approximately 35 kilometres from the airport. Transfers are available between the resort and the airport on arrival and departure, and the journey takes between 40 minutes and one hour each way.

**IMMIGRATION** — Visas are required to enter, exit or transit through Chinese territories. The most common is a single entry 30-day visa. Multiple entries, 60-day and 90-day visas are also available. Passports must have a minimum of six months validity. Enquiries should be directed to the nearest Chinese embassy or consulate.

**CLIMATE** — Beijing experiences four distinct seasons. The best weather is found from September through November when conditions are sunny and dry. Spring, from March through May, also brings pleasant temperatures although in the earlier months there is a chance of occasional sand clouds drifting in from Inner Mongolia. Summer sees high

temperatures over 30°C (80°F), although the heat does not deter travellers and this is often the busiest time of the year. Winter can be cold with temperatures of -20°C (0°F). Rainfall is almost exclusively limited to the hotter months from June through September.

**LANGUAGE** — The official language of China is Mandarin which has its origins in Beijing. Whilst the country has many distinct languages and dialects, Mandarin is the teaching medium across all schools. The use of English is becoming more common in the city centre; however, most street signs are in Chinese.

**CURRENCY** — The national currency is the *yuan* or *renminbi*. Major credit cards are accepted in hotels and larger establishments. Most currencies and traveller's cheques are easy to cash. ATM machines are widely available.

**HEALTH** — A doctor can be arranged 24 hours a day in case of emergencies. Beijing has some of the best hospitals in China. There are no particular immunisations required for entry into China unless the traveller is coming from a yellow fever-infected area. No vaccinations are required for travel to China but it is advisable to check with your doctor for current information.

**TRAVEL TIPS** — Electricity is 220 volts/50 cycles. Beijing, and all of China, is plus eight hours Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). During the winter months of December and January, warm clothes are required. In autumn and spring, guests should pack light woollens for early mornings and evenings, with lighter clothing for the rest of the day. During the summer months it is recommended that guests wear light, yet conservative attire. Guests should at all times travel with comfortable walking shoes and a wide-brimmed hat. ●



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