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China Expedition Tours, A Division of CYTS International Tours Co., Ltd. Guilin

Splendor of Great Wall Hiking-Four-day Jiankou,Mutianyu to Simatai West

<http://www.chinaexpeditiontours.com/city-tours/four-day-gubeikou-jinshanling-simatai-west.html>

Trip name: Splendor of Great Wall Hiking-Four-day Jiankou,Mutianyu to Simatai West

Trip code: GWPA41

Trip length: 4 days

Hiking route: Jiankou, Mutianyu, Gubeikou, Jinshanling, Simatai West,

Meeting point and time: Your Hotel at 8:00 am on Day 1

Finishing point and time: Your Hotel between 4-5 pm on Day4

Hiking duration:4 hours on Day 1, 5 hours on Day 2, 5 hours on Day 3, 3 hours on Day 4

Best time to go: late March to early November

Highlights:

Great Wall at Jiankou, Mutianyu, Gubeikou, Jinshanling, Simatai West

Accommodation and food at local farmer's guesthouses

Hotpot lunch

Foot massage

Physical rating: ★★★★★

Departure: Daily from Beijing

If you want to walk the major wild sections of the Great Wall around Beijing, this will be the perfect one. You will hike at Jiankou, Mutianyu, Gubeikou, Jinshanling and Simatai West in 4 days. Every section is different from the other and all of them are breathtaking beautiful. You will also have the chance to stay at the local farmer's guesthouse and enjoy some of their local specialties. This trip needs you prepare more before departure from home.

Itinerary

Day 1: Beijing-Great Wall at Jiankou (4 hours, 3 km hiking)

Our driver and guide will pick you up at 8 am at your hotel lobby, and then drive 2.5 hours to Xizhaizi village where we base ourselves. We will walk the Wall at Jiankou section today, and it will take about 4 hours on the wall. We will start the hiking from Jiankou and then continue the hike westward to the foot of Ladders to the Heaven (or the Sky Stairs and we will skip this section).

The Great Wall at Jiankou is completely untouched, original and authentic. The Wall was built on the narrow mountain ridges with large pieces of dolomite as basement. The superstructures are mainly bricks which were baked in the kilns in nearby villages. These watchtowers were abandoned after the Manchu people took over the power in 1644. It has superb scenery, dense vegetation and many fine watchtowers. The most difficult section of the climb is a 15-20 meter descent. The stone steps are the width of your foot and there is only a single balustrade of wall here for balance. You will be rewarded by the breathtaking scenery for your great effort. As it's not easy to access, there are just a few hikers at weekend and holidays.

After the trek, we will stay at a local farmer's guesthouse at Xizhaizi village. The host has been living here since he was born and he also witnessed the dramatic development of this isolated village near the Wall in the past 5 years.

Accommodation: local farmer's guesthouse

Meals:(picnic lunch, dinner)

Day 2: Jiankou-Mutianyu (5 hrs, 10 km hiking)

Start the hiking at 8 am, and it will take 5 hours hiking on the wall. You will hike on both restored and original walls. Shorts are not recommended since you will meander through jungles and bushes. We will drive to Gubeikou and stay at a local farmer's guesthouse.

Jiankou to Mutianyu section offers a wonderfully satisfying experience of the Wall. It has superb scenery, dense vegetation and many fine watch-towers in an excellent restored section which is about six metres broad. The brickwork is elaborate, with crenellations on both sides and finely curved eaves on some watch-tower roofs. There are decorative gables with animal statues, and tablets bearing calligraphy above some entrances. The first one hour is going straight up and reaches the wall, and then hikes unrestored towers. The wild Wall to the west is the original Ming Dynasty with fine stonework, and there are almost no other people. You will be rewarded when you approach Zhengbeilou Tower, where you will have a breathtaking view of Jiankou section. There will be a sharp contrast when you arrive at Mutianyu with the restored wall and towers.

We will provide you with water and snacks and you need a day pack to carry these stuff. We will stay at a traditional local farmer's courtyard guesthouse at Gubeikou village which played important role in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD) to defend the capital. The accommodation is twin-shared. There are

2 shared toilets and showers. We have chance to walk around the village and try home-made local farmer's food.

Accommodation: local farmer's guesthouse at Gubeikou village

Meals:(breakfast, picnic lunch, dinner)

Day 3: Gubeikou–Jinshanling (5 hours, 10 km hiking)

Get up at 8 am and finish breakfast by 9:00 am and then start the hike today. It will take about 5 hours hiking on the wall. This is a long but leisure day. We will come back to Gubeikou village again after the hike.

Gubeikou, along with the passes at Shanhaiguan and Juyongguan, was a key strategic target in military campaigns since ancient times. Protecting these three passes was considered vital for keeping Beijing safe from the Mongolian nomads. This is a flat valley further to the west, one of vital importance since it connected the Mongolian Plateau to the north with the vast fertile plains of north China. The vistas of the sinuous Wall snaking its way over the ridges of the Yanshan are breathtaking.

After 2 hrs hiking on the wall of Gubeikou section, we have to get off the wall to avoid a military area nearby. Going through the path in the field for 1.5 hrs, and then we will come back to the wall again at the Jinshanling section.

Accommodation: local farmer's guesthouse at Gubeikou village

Meals:(breakfast, picnic lunch, dinner)

Day 4: Jinshanling - Simatai West- Olympic venues-Beijing (3 hours, 5km hiking)

We will drive to Jinshanling in 20 minutes after a typical farmer's breakfast, and start the hike at 8am. It's the right time to produce amazing photographs. At this time there are usually no other tourists on the wall, you have the wall to yourself. It will take about 3 hours hiking on the wall. We will get off the wall at Kylin Tower, and cannot walk to Simatai East direction due to the closure of Simatai Great Wall. We will drive and pass by the Olympic venues at Bird Nest.

Jinshanling is the name given to an 11-kilometre section of the wall situated on the Jinshan Mountains. The earliest bit of this structure was built in the 6th Century AD, but most of what you see now dates from the Ming Dynasty. This section of the wall has 67 watchtowers, each built in a different style of architecture. The walkway along the top is paved with square bricks providing a level surface wide enough to construct or erect batteries. Poems and tablet writings can be found on the Jinshanling Great

Wall left from the time General Qi Jiguang directed building of this section of the Great Wall. Barrier walls were built leading to the enemy towers to protect the towers. Some of the towers were storerooms for food, hay and weapons.

We will organize a unique Hotpot lunch when back to the city. Hotpot is originally from Sichuan Province and now is popular all over China. You can choose Plain or Spicy one as you like. This is also a good opportunity to practice your chopstick skills. After lunch you will refresh your tired feet with a traditional reflexology foot massage. This is sure to leave you completely relaxed after this active adventure on the Great Wall of China. Our guide will escort you back to hotel by 5pm.

Meals:(breakfast, lunch)

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