

Getting to China for Beijing Olympics 2008

In August this year, Beijing, China, will welcome sportsmen, spectators and tourists from a variety of locations for the start of the 2008 Olympic Games.

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Beijing, with a population of 11 million people, is China's capital city and the country's political and cultural hub. This city, a pastiche of ancient palaces and grand shopping complexes, will be hosting 302 events for 28 different sports in the upcoming Summer Olympics.

If you are planning on coming to China to watch the Games or just see the sights, you will need a Tourist/ Family visit (L) visa. In order to apply for this visa, a visit to the Chinese embassy or consulate in your respective country is essential.

A candidate requires a valid passport, with at least six months of validity remaining, a Q1 visa application form that is available at the embassy and one passport photograph. Depending on nationality and amount of time you intend to stay, this visa will cost from â,₹30-â,₹90.

It takes about four days for this visa to be processed, once this is done you will be able to secure tickets for the Games' events and prepare for the rest of your journey.

Getting to China is fairly straight-forward with many large airline companies, from Cathay Pacific to British airways, flying there. The Capital International Airport is located 23.5km from the centre of Beijing. Transport to and from the airport and around the city is easy by using a taxi, a bus or the subway.

Beijing offers various accommodation alternatives, whether you want to stay in a standard star-class hotel (there are about 40 five-star hotels in Beijing), a guesthouse, hostel or cultural village, the city accommodates you depending on your specific budget.

According to Deborah Tang, Global Visa's chief representative in the Beijing office, says that people in China and in Beijing in general are highly intellectual and many speak English, 'it is an international city,' she says. 'Beijing is close to the government, this ensures that it is safe there and better equipped to hold the Games,' says Tang.

Famous for silk embroidery and jade shopping in the markets and antique shops are a must. Beijing has more than a hundred shopping complexes; go to Xidan Commercial Street for a traditional shopping centre, antiques at Panjiayuan Antique City and exported clothing at Yaxiu Clothing Wholesale Market.

If its history you've come to see take in Tian'anmen square and the Imperial Palace or indulge in traditional Chinese cuisine. Beijing has as many as 7300 cultural sites so remember to leave space in your itinerary besides enjoying the celebration of the Olympic Games.

For Tang these are the main reasons why she promises an unforgettable Olympic Games. Visit www.globalvisas.com for help applying for visas.

As the games fast approach, it is important for visitors to know what to do in Beijing and how to get there in order to enjoy all that China has to offer. For more information visit www.globalvisas.com

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For more information, Please contact:

Tamar Blieden
Immigration - Global Visas
+442071903920

You can also visit www.globalvisas.co.in for more information.