

My stopover... Beijing

There is always something exciting to do in this vibrant Chinese city for **Mary O'Brien**...



I have been visiting the vibrant city of Beijing for four years in a row now and always look forward to enjoying a stopover holiday there with my husband Martin.

Beijing is great for shopping. You could shop every night and see something different each time! In our opinion the best shopping can be done at the markets.

We really like the Silk Market, a four-storey building with hundreds of market stalls and clothing stalls. The Pearl Market is also great for pearls and other jewellery.

Beijing is a very currency friendly city, whether you have Australian or US dollars or pounds. Your money goes a long way in China, especially for dining and shopping. It's even possible to get clothes made to measure in 24 hours very cheaply.

The city is a very easy place to get around. Most of the main tourist attractions can be commuted to by Metro. It only costs 50 cents for a one-way ticket to go anywhere in Beijing, and admission fees for the attractions are reasonable too. There are many interesting places to visit too. The beautiful Summer Palace and Fragrant Hills Park is home to lakes, boats, cafés, oriental bridges and great picnic areas. The Imperial Palace, the world's largest public square, is worth seeing too, as is the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, Temple of Heaven and the Ming Dynasty Tombs.

The religious temples in Beijing are a delight to walk around too. You'll find most of them within 20 minutes of Central Railway Station. They include the Lama Temple, Confucius Temple and Temple of Heaven. And no visit to Beijing would be complete without climbing The Great Wall! We went with a private English-speaking tour guide and found the whole experience very rewarding. It's such an achievement when you reach the top!



The green and tranquil Summer Palace Gardens are very relaxing!

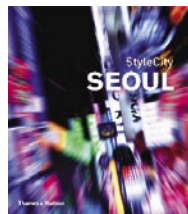
A fun day can be spent climbing the Great Wall at Jiaoshan

Martin and Mary beside the stunning Summer Palace lake



Tell us about your stopover!

Have you enjoyed a memorable stopover en-route to Australia or New Zealand? We want you to tell us about your stopover in 500 words, and send us a few snaps from your trip (in their highest resolution format), including at least one of yourself. Email your story and pics to australiaeditor@edpltd.co.uk. If we publish your account you will win a copy of *StyleCity Seoul* (£16.95, Thames and Hudson) a guide to South Korea's vibrant capital city.



Mary O'Brien is an accredited New Zealand and Australian mortgage broker for New Zealand Mortgage Solutions (www.newzealandmortgages.com.au; www.downundermortgages.co.uk)