

Capital gains

Economic powerhouse Beijing has become an essential stop on the Asian business circuit. Here, **Upward Curve** highlights where to stay and what to do in the bustling Chinese capital

Looking at Beijing's skyline today, it can be difficult to believe that China's capital was once a forbidden and forgotten city for global businesses. Closed off to the Western world for decades, Beijing now houses a flurry of international companies intent on exploring the swathe of opportunities available in the world's most populous country and is home to the headquarters of 52 companies on the Fortune Global 500 list – the largest number of any city in the world.

In total, more than 7,000 large businesses, including state-owned enterprises, large private companies and foreign-funded multinationals, have established their headquarters in Beijing, with the city accounting for almost 4% of China's entire GDP. In February this year, Beijing also overtook New York as the city with the highest number of billionaires in the world, further highlighting the economic opportunities on offer.

Whichever way you look at it, Beijing is now very much open for business, and the city offers visitors an array of excellent accommodation and dining options, as well as plenty to explore in between meetings.

WHERE TO STAY

Beijing has seen a flurry of new luxury hotel openings over the last decade, with the NUO Hotel being among the most recent, having welcomed its first guests in June 2015. The flagship establishment of Chinese five-star hotel brand NUO Hotels, the NUO Beijing is located near the city's 798 Art District and boasts its own dedicated art gallery and extensive in-house art collection curated by iconic Chinese artist Zeng Fanzhi. In addition to 438 guest rooms and suites and seven restaurants and bars, the hotel offers 15 executive-style function rooms for business meetings, while the impressive 1,600-square metre Grand Ballroom provides

one of the city's largest and most sophisticated special event venues.

The Waldorf Astoria Beijing, meanwhile, features 176 luxuriously appointed guest rooms and suites and three unique restaurants, as well as 796 square metres of function meeting space. Located in the heart of the city on the former site of Xianliang Temple, the hotel is just 27 kilometres from Beijing International Airport, 2.5 kilometres from Beijing Railway Station, and is within walking distance of the Dengshikou Subway Station, making it an excellent base for any stay.

Set in the busy Chaoyang District, opposite the iconic CCTV Tower, the high-end Rosewood Beijing also enjoys a convenient location for business travellers. Its meeting and function space, totalling 3,350 square metres, includes a pillar-less ballroom and The Pavilion residential-style event venue, while there are also 283 luxurious

Main: Beijing's skyline reflects the economic development that has occurred since China opened up to the West

rooms and six restaurants and lounges, including the Manor Club, Rosewood's sophisticated, exclusive access executive lounge.

NUO Hotel Beijing

www.nuohotel.com

Waldorf Astoria Beijing

www.waldorfastoria.com/beijing

Rosewood Beijing

www.rosewoodhotels.com/beijing

DINNER AND DRINKS

No trip to Beijing is complete without tasting the city's most famous dish. Restaurants serving Peking duck can be found all over Beijing, with Da Dong Roast Duck Restaurant at Nanxincang proving to be a long-term favourite. Duck connoisseurs

also speak very highly of the Made in China restaurant at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. This award-winning eatery serves mouth-watering old-fashioned Peking duck from its wood-fired oven, as well as other specialities from northern China, and also boasts an extensive wine cellar and an array of tempting desserts, such as passion fruit sorbet with pear champagne. In addition to

the buzzy main room overlooking



the action in the show kitchens, Made in China also offers five private rooms for more intimate gatherings of between six and 16 diners.

Elsewhere, the famed Temple Restaurant Beijing (TRB) remains one of the city's hottest fine dining establishments, serving contemporary European cuisine in a lovingly restored 600-year-old temple, while Capital M – owned by Australian restaurateur Michelle Garnaust – offers a menu of Mediterranean favourites with fine views over Qianmen Gate and Tian'anmen Square. Favourite dishes

included the crispy suckling pig, hot house-smoked salmon, slow-baked, salt-encased leg of lamb and, for dessert, M's 'Very Famous Pavlova'.

For quicker, more informal bites on-the-go, a dazzling array of dishes can be found at Wangfujing Snack Street –

a pedestrianised lane in Dongcheng District lined with stalls selling authentic food from all over China.

There is no shortage of evening entertainment options in Beijing either, with Atmosphere – the highest bar in city – a perennial favourite. Located on the 80th floor of China World Tower, within the Shangri La Hotel, Atmosphere offers a fine collection of single malts and uses only the freshest ingredients in its cocktail concoctions, all with a dramatic backdrop of the Beijing cityscape, framed by a ceiling resembling a constellation of stars.

The views are no less impressive from XIU – a rooftop garden bar at the Park Hyatt that features Chinese-style pavilions and outdoor terraces surrounded by Beijing's neon-lit, high-rise cityscape.

Made in China

beijing.grand.hyatt.com

Temple Restaurant Beijing

www.trb-cn.com

Capital M

www.m-restaurantgroup.com

Atmosphere

www.shangri-la.com

XIU

beijing.park.hyatt.com

announced the foundation of the People's Republic of China.

The Front Gate (Qianmen Gate) looms over the southern end of the square, providing an impressive reminder of the old fortifications that used to protect the city, while the eastern side is home to the National Museum of China. At the northern end is Tiananmen Gate, which is often referred to as the front entrance to the Forbidden City. This must-see attraction is a highlight for all visitors to Beijing, offering a glimpse at the secretive hideaway of the ancient emperors. It now houses the Palace Museum, while you could easily spend a whole day discovering the site's vast halls, epic squares and quiet gardens. If you have more time to explore, it's worth heading out of the city to the stretches of the iconic Great Wall that await in the surrounding municipality. While Badaling is easiest to reach and is perhaps the most visited, Jinshanling offers a more authentic and unique experience of the iconic structure.

Temple of Heaven

en.tiantanpark.com

National Museum of China

en.chnmuseum.cn

The Palace Museum

www.dpm.org.cn

Great Wall

www.friendsofgreatwall.org

