**The Great Wall of China**

The Great Wall of China is not a continuous wall but is a collection of short walls that often follow the crest of hills on the southern edge of the [Mongolian](https://www.thoughtco.com/mongolia-facts-and-history-195625) plain. The Great Wall of China, known as "long Wall of 10,000 Li" in China, extends about 8,850 kilometers (5,500 miles).

## **Building the Great Wall of China**

A first set of walls, designed to keep Mongol nomads out of China, were built of earth and stones in wood frames during the [Qin Dynasty](https://www.thoughtco.com/impact-of-the-qin-dynasty-688020) (221 to 206 BCE).

Some additions and modifications were made to these simple walls over the next millennium but the major construction of the "modern" walls began in the [Ming Dynasty](https://www.thoughtco.com/emperors-of-the-ming-dynasty-195255) (1388 to 1644 CE).

The Ming fortifications were established in new areas from the Qin walls. They were up to 25 feet (7.6 meters) high, 15 to 30 feet (4.6 to 9.1 meters) wide at the base, and from 9 to 12 feet (2.7 to 3.7 meters) wide at the top (wide enough for marching troops or wagons). At regular intervals, guard stations and watch towers were established.

Since the Great Wall was discontinuous, Mongol invaders had no trouble breaching the wall by going around it, so the wall proved unsuccessful and was eventually abandoned. Additionally, a policy of mollification during the subsequent Ch'ing Dynasty that sought to pacify the Mongol leaders through religious conversion also helped to limit the need for the Great Wall.

Through Western contact with China from the 17th through 20th centuries, the legend of the Great Wall of China grew along with tourism to the wall. Restoration and rebuilding took place in the 20th century and in 1987 the Great Wall of China was made a World Heritage Site. Today, a portion of the Great Wall of China, about 50 miles (80 km) from Beijing, receives thousands of tourists each day.

## **Great Wall Facts**

The Great Wall of China is estimated to be 2,300 years old. It is in the list of the seven wonders of the world.

It was named the great wall as a collective name for a series of walls that were built across the historical northern borders of China.

The wall was built to protect and unite territories of Chinese states and empires against various nomadic groups of the steppe.

The wall is made up of earth and stone, it stretches from the China seaport of Shanhaiguan into Gansu province.

The wall was built to overlap in some strategic sections of the wall for maximum security.

The Great Wall of China became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in December 1987.

The wall is the longest man-made structure in the world, with a total length of about 13170.7 miles (21,196.19 km).

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| **Great Wall of China** |
| 萬里長城 / 万里长城 |
| The [Ming dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ming_Great_Wall) Great Wall at [Jinshanling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jinshanling%22%20%5Co%20%22Jinshanling) |
| Map of all the wall constructions |
| **General information** |
| **Type** | Fortification |
| **Country** | [China](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) |
| [**Coordinates**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system) | [40.68°N 117.23°E](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Great_Wall_of_China&params=40.68_N_117.23_E_region:CN_type:landmark)[Coordinates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): [40.68°N 117.23°E](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Great_Wall_of_China&params=40.68_N_117.23_E_region:CN_type:landmark) |
| **Technical details** |
| **Size** | 21,196.18 km (13,170.70 mi)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Wall_of_China#cite_note-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Wall_of_China#cite_note-2)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Wall_of_China#cite_note-ncha-3) |

**Which Section of Great Wall to Visit**

he official survey by the National Cultural Heritage Administration of China reveals that Inner Mongolia, Hebei, and Shanxi are the top three regions boasting the most Great Wall relics. The walls, crossing 26 degrees of longitude, and not machine-made, appear in totally diversified status and sceneries. Generally the walls in east China are kept in good condition, while those in the wild northwest have been heavily weathered or damaged.

Beijing, owning only 5.38% of all the wall relics throughout China, has the quintessence of the Ming Great Wall. The best-preserved and most-visited sections are generally within 130 km north of downtown Beijing.

* First-time visitors to Beijing: Badaling, or Mutianyu
* Return visitors: Juyongguan, or Simatai (with Gubei Water Town)
* Experienced hikers: Jiankou (wild and dangerous)
* Best sections out of Beijing: Shanhaiguan in Hebei, Jiayuguan in Gansu, Zhenbeitai in Shaanxi
* [Badaling](https://www.travelchinaguide.com/china_great_wall/scene/beijing/badaling.htm)
* [Mutianyu](https://www.travelchinaguide.com/china_great_wall/scene/beijing/mutianyu.htm)
* [Juyongguan](https://www.travelchinaguide.com/china_great_wall/scene/beijing/juyongguan.htm)
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