

Quiet, Wild, Fantastic Views--History / Background of Gubeikou

Gubeikou is one of the most well-known strategic pass and most accessible sections of the Wall in Beijing. About 120 kilometers from downtown Beijing, Gubeikou was an important mountain pass dates back to 16th century. With 14 beacon towers, 143 watch towers, 16 strategic pass, the majority of wall building led by noted general Xuda in 1378 during the Ming dynasty. Gubeikou is an awesome place where you'll experience uncrowded adventurous hike and the power of nature.

Divided into four parts: Wohushan, Panlongshan, Jinshanling, and Simatai, The famous Gubeikou Great Wall stretches for more than 40 kilometers (25 miles). The solid watchtowers at Gubeikou have six archways, ten arched doors and two floors. The highest point of Gubeikou is Wangjing Tower, 986m (3235ft) above sea level.

Gubeikou is not merely a relic but it remained as a battlefield in 1930s. Chinese army fought against Japanese invasion troops at Gubeikou in 1933. 360 Chinese soldiers died and were buried at the foot of Gubeikou cemetery. No rebuilding or renovation was done since anti-Japanese invasion war.



Gubeikou Weather Conditions

Gubeikou weather can change rapidly and unexpectedly. Weather on Gubeikou is usually like Beijing. Spring (March to May) has much wind sometimes sandstorms. Summers (June to August) are hot, humid, and sometimes rainy. Autumn is generally comfortable. January is the coldest month while July is the warmest. If high winds, heavy rain/snow or low cloud is predicted then postpone your walk for another day. Before you start your walk check the Gubeikou Weather Forecast:

<http://en.weather.com.cn/weather/101011300.shtml>

Before the Trip--What to Bring

Most important is a good pair of hiking walking shoes. Running shoes or trainers is fine too. Quick dry fabrics (like merino wool or polypropylene) are better than cotton or denim. A warm jacket, hat & gloves are a good idea for cold weather. The sun is very strong in Beijing and it's easy to get burnt. A sunhat and sunglasses are a good idea in hot summer.

Other Items

- ✓ Tissues
- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Snacks and water

And of course you'll need a light backpack in which to hold all of this!

Plan a Hike

Gubeikou is remote but more easily accessible, only the initial climb up is physically demanding. Walking on Gubeikou Great Wall towards Jinshanling is really a great moment. All of a sudden you can see the Wall on the mountain tops stretching as far as you can see, like a never-ending dragon.

Distance: 8 – 10 km **Avg. Time:** 4 –5 hours

Start / Finish: Gubeikou – Jinshanling. Public transport is Not directly available to both ends from Beijing. A quicker, easier option is to arrange a guided tour from Beijing. Generally takes about 2.5 hours to reach Gubeikou.

Season: All year. Spring and fall offer fine weather. Winter can also bring clear skies, however, frozen snow and ice can make the walk more difficult. Summer can be hot and hazy.



Maps / Info: Map is necessary, but more practical way is to hire a guide. The hilly trail is hard to follow as part of Gubeikou is officially closed. Make a detour in the middle of the hike where the military area begins. It's not easy to find the right way up, as there are no signs for the detour. Better hire a guide to walk with you.

Admission fee: 25RMB p.p for Gubeikou, 65RMB p.p for Jinshanling. Needs to be paid at either Gubeikou or Jinshanling.

Day of Trip

Part of Gububeikou goes through the military area. Very often, there is only room enough for one person to pass at a time, with nothing to hold on to for safety. You need to look out for loose stones underfoot, as they may easily cause you to lose your footing.

Watch out for the sharp spines of the nearby plants, which may hurt you or snag your clothes in spring and summer. Several watchtowers have collapsed, with few

complete bricks still in place. Grasses grow in abundance through the cracks between bricks. You may see the names of previous visitors carved into the bricks.



Gubeikou watchtowers

An interesting fact about construction work of Great Wall is that to make up a complete defense network, Mutianyu are connected by military architecture—namely watchtowers. Getting a look watchtowers helps us gain an insight into Mutianyu Great Wall.

The high “fence” watchtowers were first built by local governor of Fujian province Tan Lun (1520-1577) and his chief officer Oi Jiguang (1528-1588) during Ming dynasty. The watch towers were usually 2-3 stories. The watch towers were connected with each other and could send reinforcement to neighbors. The middle layer was empty with windows for discharging arrows. The upper floor was a lookout turret, surrounded by battlements. The soldiers were to be hidden inside. The lower layer was the place where cannons were to be fired on approaching enemy. The enemy were now held at bay: their arrows could not reach the soldiers on top of the wall. Their cavalry dare not approach the Great Wall. Watch towers were like fences standing on the Great Wall.

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Tan Lun and Qi Jiguang made out a plan to build 3,000 watchtowers from Juyongguan Pass to Shanhaiguan Pass, a huge civil engineering project indeed. When the watchtowers had been completed, Mongolian arrows could not reach the soldiers on top of the wall, their cavalry dare not approach the Great Wall. Watchtowers proved to be very useful to block the attracts of Mongolian cavalry. Simple put it did work!

Additional information:

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| Emergency Numbers | |
| Police (Calling) | 110 |
| Police (Text message) | 12110 |
| First-aid Ambulance | 120 |
| Fire | 119 |
| Traffic Accidents | 122 |

Thanks for Visiting!

Enjoy the rest of your stay in Beijing, and we look forward to seeing you again soon.

