



Peregrine Travel Group

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peregrinetravelgroup@earthlink.net**Address:** 9000 Crow Canyon Road, Suite S393, Danville, California 94506,
USA**Telephone:** 1-925-451-7848

Beijing's Hutong-a fresh insight into Beijing's local life

The word hutong came from the Mongolian language about 700 years ago. The original Mongolian word was hottog, meaning "water well." In other words, it means a place where people live, because people always gather where there is water. Today in Beijing, the word hutong means a small alleyway or lane. They are typical of the old part of Beijing and are formed by lines of siheyuan (a compound made up of rooms around a courtyard) in which most Beijing residents used to live.

Surrounding the Forbidden City, many were built during the Yuan (1206-1341), Ming (1368-1628) and Qing (1644-1908) dynasties. In the prime of these dynasties the emperors, in order to establish supreme power for themselves, planned the city and arranged the residential areas according to the etiquette systems of the Zhou Dynasty. The center of the city of Beijing was the royal palace -- the Forbidden City.

In old China, there were clear definitions of what a street was and what a lane was. A 36-metre-wide road was called a big street and an 18-metre-wide road was called a small street. A 9-metre-wide lane was called a hutong. Most of the hutongs in Beijing run east-west or north-south. This is because most siheyuan were built along such axes according to the rules of Feng Shui and to take in more sunshine and resist cold winds from the north. Of course, not all hutongs follow the straight and narrow style. There are also slant hutongs, half hutongs and blind hutongs. Beijing's shortest hutong is just 10 meters long and the narrowest is only about 40 centimeters wide. Some hutongs have more than 20 turns. As such, they are often a maze through which it is fascinating to wander through these alleyways. In many people's minds, Beijing is associated with the hutongs. They are an important part of the culture and way of life of Beijingers, especially the older generation.



Peregrine Travel Group is pleased to offer the Chinese cultural experience tour in Hutong. See how residents live in the traditional Hutong district. Take a glimpse of life in the capital city as it

has been for generations. Ride through the alleys of *hutong* in a Peda cab. Visit a local *hutong* family--talk with them, hear first-hand life stories of their past, and taste the real Chinese family dishes cooked in a courtyard kitchen. In this respect, you see the old in the new in Beijing as an ancient yet modern city.



As part of the Chinese cultural experience tour, you will have an opportunity to practice Tai Chi with an instructor at the Temple of Heaven, learn how to write Chinese calligraphy from a local Chinese calligrapher. You will also visit a kindergarten school inside Hutong.

Originally developed in China as a form of self-defense, tai chi is a graceful form of exercise that has existed for some 2,000 years. Practiced regularly, tai chi can help you reduce stress and enjoy other health benefits. Tai chi, sometimes called tai chi chuan, is a noncompetitive, self-paced system of gentle physical exercise and stretching. To do tai chi, you perform a series of postures or movements in a slow, graceful manner. Each posture flows into the next without pausing. Anyone, regardless of age or physical ability, can practice tai chi. It doesn't take physical power. Rather, tai chi emphasizes technique over strength.



Chinese calligraphy is an Oriental art. But what makes it an art?

It is very much like painting. It uses Chinese characters to communicate the spiritual world of the artist. Just as one thousand persons will have as many faces, one thousand persons will have as many differences in handwriting. Through the medium of form, way of handling the brush, presentation, and style, calligraphy as a work of art conveys the moral integrity, character, emotions, esthetic feelings and culture of the artist to readers affecting them by the power of appeal and the joy of beauty.

Calligraphy is not only a practical technique for writing Chinese characters, but also a unique Oriental art of expression and a branch of learning or discipline as well. As a branch of learning it is rich in content, including the evolution of writing styles, development and rules of technique,

history of calligraphy, calligraphers and their inheritance in art, and evaluation of calligraphy as a work of art. This branch of learning is wide ranging and deep, forming an important part of Chinese culture.



A visit to a Hutong **kindergarten** will give you a deeper insight to children growing up not only in China, but in this very unique neighborhood of Beijing. As most of Chinese families are two-income household families, parents don't have enough time to take care of their children or give them guidance. So the kindergarten life becomes more and more important during the children's growth and development stage of their life.



Reserve early with Peregrine Travel Group for your Beijing Hutong Tour and experience Chinese traditional culture in a modern city.

For more information, please go to our website: www.peregrinetravelgroup.com or

Email us at: peregrinetravelgroup@earthlink.net

Peregrine Travel's Upcoming Groups:

*Chinese New Year Hong Kong January 2009
7-Day Tour, 10-Day & 15 Day Tours (incl. China)*

*Lt. Governor John Garamendi California
Delegation China Trip February 18-28, 2009*

Taiwan Global Sourcing Fair April 2009

Yiwu Trade Fair July 2009

Testimonials:

Our tour guide was the best. It was wonderful to travel with a knowledgeable and conscientious person like Eric. D.P. & B.M.

What impressed us the most about our Beijing Tour is the Great Wall and our guide, Jessica's explanation. R. S.

The Li River and all its beauty impressed me the most. Also the down town area by the hotel was very exciting. E. T.

