

SIGHTSEEING IN PEKING

Tien An Men Square and Surroundings

The Tien An Men Square stands at the heart of the city. On the north side is the long red wall of the Imperial City, with the imposing stone Tien An Men, or Gate of Heavenly Peace, in the centre. In the south the square ends at the Chian men, the double gate which connected the Inner and Outer Cities. The square is flanked on either side by huge modern buildings, the National People's Congress Building to the west and the Historical Museum and the Museum of the Chinese Revolution on the east.

The Imperial Palace (The Forbidden City)

The former palace of the Ming (1368-1644) and Ching (1644-1911) courts, the Imperial Palace is the largest and most complete existing ensemble of traditional Chinese architecture. Rebuilding of the palaces was begun in 1406 under the Emperor Yung Lo, and the general outlines of his plan still survive. Over the reigns which followed, the palace was renovated numerous times; most of the buildings are 18th century.

The grounds cover an area of 250 acres and are surrounded by a moat, still full of water, and by walls over 35 feet high. Four towers stand at the corners, each surmounted by a pavilion with an elaborate yellow roof; four gates lead into the city, one on each side. The impressive Wu Men gate in the South wall is the usual entry to the Palace.

The Palace consists mainly of two major parts.