

## Week 2 (June 21-25)

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The first week in Beijing, China was important for students to dive into the Chinese culture. Beginning to get acquainted with the environment is a crucial step in studying abroad. This includes anything from visits to historical artifacts to eating authentic Chinese meals.

Day 7



*Pictured from left to right: Lynn Nguyen (holding our mascot, Shasta the Coog), Keyin Scott, Hannah Bonner, Eleanor Dietz, Julie Moniuc, Erica Lucas, Colton Morrow, and Vasilios Tsibanos.*

2017 IRES attendees are at the connecting flight in Dallas International Airport on the way to Beijing, where students ate their last meal in the United States. Everyone got an early start getting to the airport in Houston. Traveling would take over 15 hours in total, but students are excited to commence their journey to Beijing.



*Lynn Nguyen with her makeshift birthday cake*

Today is one of the students' birthday, Lynn Nguyen! She had a makeshift birthday cake with a candle while everyone sang Happy Birthday to her.

Upon arrival to Beijing, students were greeted with a long line for customs. There were people from all over the world in this line; Americans, Mongolians, Germans, etc. As much as it seemed like it would go on forever, students actually ended up moving through it rather quickly.



*Customs line for foreigners*

After retrieval of their luggage, students traveled by subway with the help of Wen and Guowen to arrive to their dorms at the College of Technology. The subway was not too crowded at this time, which was great for the students lugging around bags.

Students met Dr. Wang for a brief talk before heading over to enjoy their first meal in China. Everyone was amazed at how delicious and cheap the food was.



*Canteen food at the College of Technology*

Day 8

After a long day of travel, attendees finally commence their journey in Beijing. First stop is the Geology Plaza where students got a lecture over Beijing Land subsidence. Students were interested in similarities and differences between land subsidence in Houston and Beijing.



*Lecture over Beijing Land Subsidence*

Students and Dr. Wang had a wonderful lunch at the geology plaza. The lunch was buffet

style and included a variety of Chinese dishes.



*Lunch at the Geology Plaza*

During the afternoon, students were given free time to relax or roam the city. Some of the students played badminton on the College of Technology campus with some Chinese students.



*Badminton game at College of Technology*

Another group of students visited the hutongs around Lama Temple. Hutongs are narrow alleyways in traditional residential areas where often times, small shops and boutiques are located. It was a rainy day, so not many people were out in the hutongs. Students, nevertheless, enjoyed the scenery as well as discovering the little boutiques and cozy coffee shops. For dinner, they had the famous, authentic dumplings from Mr. Shi's Dumplings restaurant.



*Authentic dumpling dinner from Mr. Shi's Dumplings restaurant*

#### Day 9

Today was an exciting day for Dr. Wang and the students because of their trip to the U.S. embassy to visit the head director of Beijing NSF, Dr. Nancy Sung. The building had some marvelous Chinese architecture showed by the outer and inner courtyards and the water ponds. No pictures were allowed inside the building, which was a disappointment for those who wanted to capture the beauty of the embassy.



*NSF office in Beijing*

Students were given a free afternoon to visit the city. First and foremost, students had lunch at a Peking duck restaurant with Wen. Peking duck is a famous dish originated from Beijing.



*Peking Duck*



*Students in front of the Peking duck restaurant*

Students, with Li as their tour guide, headed to Tian'anmen Square in search of the Forbidden City. The Forbidden City is a famous imperial palace, which is open to the public.



Students visited the highest point in central Beijing located in Jingshan Park. This park overlooks the northern side of the Forbidden City. The picture is taken on top of a man-made hill “Jingshan,” which translates to “Prospect Hill.”



*View of the Forbidden City from Jingshan Park*

Day 10



*Students outside of the National Geological Museum*

Today is an exciting day for our geophysics and geology students because of their visits to the National Geological Museum in Beijing. Museums are a great place for education. We spent a lot of time with a graduate student tour guide who went in depth on explaining each floor of the museum. First floor had information about the Earth including plate tectonics, earthquakes, the water cycle etc. Second floor was a vast collection of minerals. Many students recognized the minerals from their previous courses. Third floor had paleobiology, which included many fossil specimens.



*Students posing with dinosaurs*

After the museum, students and Wen found a nearby restaurant to eat lunch.



*Lunch near museum*

The rest of the day was a free day, which students used to explore the city.

Two of our students headed over to the Summer Palace where the views were incredible. The Summer Palace is a popular destination where one can find gardens, palaces, and lakes. It is located in northwest Beijing and offers beautiful nature scenery. The Summer Palace is the largest and most well preserved royal park in China.





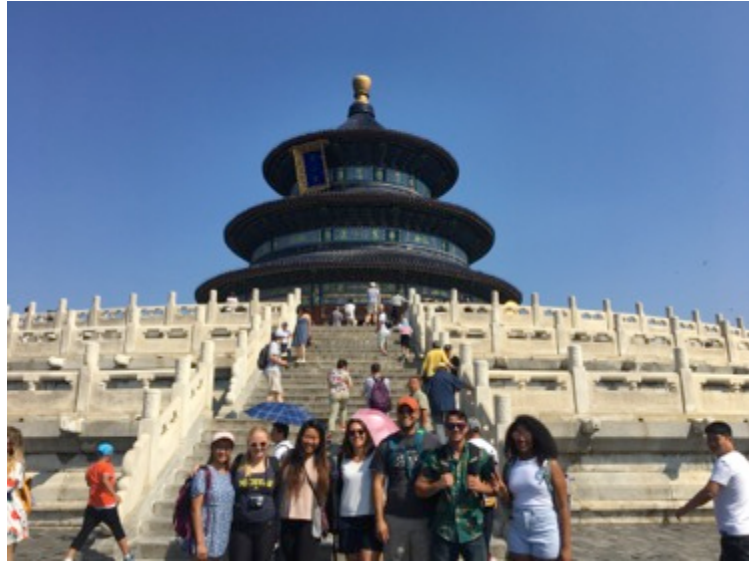
*Summer Palace*



*Scenic View from the Summer Palace*

#### Day 11

Today is the last full day in Beijing before heading to Wuhan. Students woke up bright and early to head over to the Temple of Heaven. After a breakfast at the university's canteen, students hopped into the subway. The ride over to the temple was short with only one simple transfer. Fortunately, it was a beautiful, sunny day even though it was the hottest day of the week. The temperature reached 31 degrees Celsius.



*Students in front of the Temple of Heaven*

Beijing has been an amazing adventure, but students are excited to head over to their next destination: Wuhan.