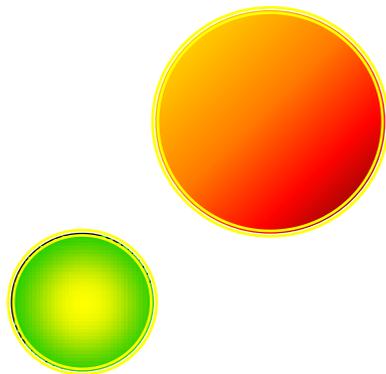


FAQS FOR NEW INTERNS

The Schoolhouse at Mutianyu Great Wall



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*Intern from May to
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INTRODUCTION

So you have chosen to do an internship at the Schoolhouse! I'm sure you have lots of questions. I know I did. Before I left home, I was terrified because I didn't know what to expect. I wasn't sure what questions I should be asking or where to go for the answers. I hope that this FAQ guide can help you to feel more comfortable before you leave home and during your first couple of weeks in China. This is by no means intended to be an exhaustive set of every question you might have, nor can I make any promises as to the current reliability of the information provided. Instead I have put it together as a summary of my experiences as an intern here and as a resource I wish I had had. Hopefully after reading it you will have a better idea of what to expect and perhaps even an idea of further questions you want to ask. Don't hesitate to do so!

BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME

1. Where will I be living?

*You will be provided with a **shared double room** in the staff building next to the Brickyard in Beigou. Each room has two twin beds, two wardrobes and two bedside tables. You are also provided with linens and a towel, all changed weekly. Each room has **air conditioning** and **heating** that you can control.*

*The building also has a basic **kitchen** with a stovetop and fridges you can use, a living room with TV and two men's and women's **bathrooms** (one of each with a shower).*

*A single **washing machine** and dryer is available to use and soap is provided.*

2. What will I be wearing?

*You will be provided with two **black short-sleeved polo shirts** with the Schoolhouse logo. You must also wear **black pants** (or shorts) and **black shoes**. You will*

Quick Tip: The temperature varies quite a bit throughout the day, so make sure you bring a warm sweater.

be on your feet for much of the day, so I recommend you make sure they are comfortable.

3. What properties are part of the Schoolhouse?

The Schoolhouse operation comprises the **Brickyard** in Beigou, **Xiaolumian** (the noodle restaurant) in Beigou, **a number of guest houses** in Beigou and Mutianyu and the **Schoolhouse** itself (a restaurant and glass shop) in Mutianyu. We offer transportation for guests and staff between the two villages. There is a map at the end of this document that will help you situate all the properties.

4. What should I bring with me?

Bringing a **computer** is a must, as you will spend quite a lot of time working on it and using the internet to communicate. A **cell phone** that takes a SIM card is also a good idea, but one will be provided if you don't have one. A **lock** could be useful if you plan to live in hostels on your days off or want to lock the drawer on your bedside table. If you come from a country where the electricity or plug type is different, you will want a **converter** and/or a **transformer** so you can use your electronic equipment here. If you plan to go hiking on or around the Wall, sturdy **hiking shoes** are also a must. If you tend to get peckish or are a picky eater, it might not be a bad idea to bring some **snacks** (granola bars, peanut butter, etc.), but you can pick up these things in Beijing. Lastly, if you tend to get homesick, some **pictures** from home might cheer you up.

Quick Tip: Most computers are dual voltage so you may not need a transformer for yours. Check it first!

5. What documentation do I need?

A **passport** and **visa** are necessary to work in China. The type of visa will vary depending on what country you are coming from as well as the rules at the time, but when I was here I needed a three-month visa that I was able to extend part way through my stay. You will receive an invitation from the Schoolhouse that you need to take with you when you apply for your visa.

You will also obviously need your **plane ticket**, and it is a good idea to send your itinerary to Jim once you have purchased it.

Within a couple of days of your arrival, a driver will take you to the local police station so you can register with the police. Don't forget to take your passport with you when you do this.

Travel insurance is also important to buy before you leave in case you get sick while you are here. Details and price vary by policy so make sure to read the fine print. A simple Google search will turn up many companies that offer travel insurance and banks are also a good place to start. Here are a few examples: TravelCuts (for Canadians), travelinsured.com (Canada/US), mondial-assistance.com (world wide).

6. What will the weather be like?

The temperature varies greatly by month. Below are a couple of graphs¹ showing what you might expect in the way of weather. Remember that these are averages and don't necessarily represent exactly what the weather will be like. Also, they are figures for Beijing. Mutianyu and Beigou are farther North, so expect it to be a bit cooler (approx. 4°C).



The blue graph shows average monthly temperature highs and lows; the red one shows average precipitation.

¹ Graphs taken from <http://www.weather.com/weather/wxclimatology/monthly/graph/CHXX0008>

ONCE YOU ARRIVE

7. What will a typical day be like?

Everyone's day is a little different, but work typically starts at **9 am** and ends at **6 pm**. If you are working at the **Schoolhouse**, a car will pick you up around 8:15 am to take you there. Between 9 and 11 is usually prep time for the rest of the day. Bills are written, forms filled out, reserved tables are set up, reservations confirmed etc. This is also time you can spend working on your project (but more on that later).

After 11, **the lunch rush** starts and continues until about 3 pm. During this time, you may act as a **host or hostess**, seating people at their tables or helping the wait staff. There is a piece of paper with all the reservations on it so you know where to seat people. Every table has a number and you will have to keep track of which tables are free and which ones you can sit walk-ins at. It is also your job to set tables for walk-ins and pour water. Once in a while you may also have to take an order. In the kitchen there is a poster that tells you how every item on the menu should be written, but you can also take it however you like and find a waitress to help you rewrite it afterward. The yellow paper goes to the cashier, the green one to the cold kitchen and the pink one to the hot kitchen.

After 3 pm, **check-in** begins. It is likely that you will help with this task by taking guests to their houses and showing them around. You will need to explain to them what water they can drink, about the ipod docking station, the wifi, the air conditioning and the cookies, fruit, tea and coffee and show them around to all the rooms. Take your cell phone with you so you can call someone if the guests have questions you don't know how to answer.

You might also work in the **Brickyard**, where the duties are fairly similar. You might answer guests' questions, check them into their rooms and show them around, help out in the dining area or work in the spa.

Once in a while, you could also be helping out at **Xiaolumian**—our noodle restaurant. In that case, you will help set tables, take orders, carry food and talk to guests.

At the end of the day, there will be a car to take you back to the Brickyard—unless you're already there of course.

Some nights you may work **night duty** from 4 pm to midnight. This involves sitting in the Brickyard lodge and helping out with anything that comes up. Guests may come by with questions or to get food or drinks. At the end of the night you will help the night manager lock up.

8. What happens during a typical week?

The **weekends** are our busiest days. The school bus comes in from Beijing on both Saturday and Sunday, so there are special tasks associated with that. **Monday** is meeting day; everyone meets individually with Jim for 15 minutes or so and there is also a Food and Beverage meeting to discuss comments we have received from guests. Tuesdays to Fridays are a little quieter and thus it is during this time that people typically get their **days off**.

9. What and when do I eat?

You are provided with **two meals** a day (lunch and dinner) when you are working. You will eat these around 11:30 am and 5:00 pm. These meals typically include lots of rice and vegetables as well as some meat. You are on your own for breakfast, but you can also order **one à la carte item** (beverage, appetizer or main) per day off the menu. This is encouraged, so the kitchen can get feedback on the taste of the food.

10. How do I get to and from Beijing on my days off?

There are two main possibilities here. When there is a **car** going, you can catch a ride into the city. Otherwise, you have to take a **taxi** to Huairou (rmb 40-50) and a **bus** that takes 1.5-2 hours from there to Dongzhimen subway station. It goes very frequently and runs from 6 am to 8 pm.

11. Where do I live in Beijing during my days off?

The Schoolhouse will reimburse a certain amount for you to stay in a **hotel/hostel** for up to two nights a week. You will have to find this accommodation yourself and I recommend making a reservation

before you leave the Schoolhouse. Don't forget to get an official **receipt (fapiao)** made out to the Schoolhouse before you check out. Taking a Schoolhouse business card with you will help with this.

Quick Tip: Just like the guests at the Schoolhouse, you will need your passport to check in at a hotel/hostel.

If you are wandering around Beijing while you are there, I recommend taking a business card from the hotel or hostel with you so that if you get lost, you can always give it to a taxi driver and get back safely.

12. What if I forgot something? Is there somewhere in town I can buy supplies?

*Both Beigou and Mutianyu have a **convenience store** where you can buy supplies such as shampoo, toothpaste, fruit, vegetables and snacks, but they are very tiny and limited.*

13. How can I use the internet?

*There is **wifi** everywhere on the Schoolhouse property from the Brickyard to the houses, from the Schoolhouse to Xiaolumien. It is not particularly fast, but you will be able to use it without a password. Within a couple of days of your arrival, someone will also install **VPN** on your computer, which will also allow you to visit and use websites that are typically blocked in China.*

14. How can I answer guests' questions?

*Guests will have lots of different questions, so don't be afraid to say "Sorry, I don't know right now, but I will be happy to find out and come back and tell you/call you with the answer." On the other hand, it is a good idea to spend some time getting acquainted with our **website** and other information we provide, so that even if you don't remember every detail, you know where to look. Also, if you familiarize yourself with who is in charge of what (finance, sustainability, guest relations, etc.) you will be able to quickly direct questions to the right person.*

15. What if I don't speak Chinese? How can I communicate?

Lots of the staff does speak English and gesturing can be quite effective once you get good at it. You will sometimes need to ask other people to interpret for you. However, included in an appendix at the end of this document are a list of words and phrases that you might find useful².

16. How is information distributed throughout the different buildings and people?

*The Schoolhouse uses **Google Documents** to share information about all areas of the business. These range from what houses are booked when to*

² These words were compiled by my fellow intern Ramona Jhunjnuwala

mealtime reservations. You will be given access to these so you know what is going on.

You will also get a Schoolhouse **e-mail address** (yourname@schoolhousehotels.com) that you can link to your regular account or a new one if you wish.

17. What can I do to prevent or deal with homesickness and culture shock?

Everyone deals with being in new surroundings in different ways. Having pictures or objects from home might help some people, as well as frequent communication with people back at home. But for others, the best thing to do is to immerse themselves as quickly as possible in the new culture. You have to find what works for you, but don't worry if you are homesick at first. It's completely **normal** when you are far from home. You have to leave yourself time to **adapt**. If you can, try reading up on China before you leave home so that you have a better idea of what to expect and aren't so disoriented.

Quick Tip: Skype is a wonderfully cheap way to keep in touch with family and friends back home.

Some things to try if you are feeling down³:

1. Start a journal or blog.
2. Eat well.
3. Sleep enough, but not too much.
4. Take a step back from events that confuse or frustrate you and try to understand them. Although it may be difficult, try not to judge Chinese culture by the standards of your own country.
5. Remember that just because you may have trouble communicating, you are not stupid.
6. Be physically active.
7. Try to find the humour in things that challenge you.

³ Suggestions found at <http://www.juliaferguson.com/shock.html>

8. *Find someone to talk to and compare stories.*

18. What do I do if I get sick or injured?

Since you bought medical insurance before you left, don't panic. Everything will be okay. If it is an emergency, call somebody in charge. If you need to go to the hospital, Beijing United Family Hospital is a good bet as there are English speaking doctors. If it is not an emergency, make sure you call your insurance provider before you go. If it is, get someone to call them for you as soon as possible.

19. What will my project be?

I can't tell you what your specific project will be, but I can tell you what some interns have done in the past. You will have to find a project that helps the Schoolhouse but is also meaningful for you.

Giulia Praolini wrote a report analyzing and putting into numbers the extent to which the Schoolhouse is sustainable.

Erin Williams, Audrey Gueho and Eloise Walter each wrote a book about Mutianyu and its surroundings.

In addition to her book, Audrey came up with four educational programs for kids and made sustainability diagrams for each of the homes we rent. She also took over a sustainable food (composting, sustainable gardening, and fruit and nut trees) program. Furthermore, she managed a 10-day event about climate change and organized weekly movie nights.

Alex Sammartino wrote a PDF about the history of Xiaolumian.

I wrote this FAQ package and took responsibility for the Schoolhouse Facebook page in an attempt to increase membership and readership.

CONCLUSION

I hope that this FAQ guide has helped to answer some of your questions. Don't worry if you still have more. Everyone here is friendly and all you have to do is ask. No question is stupid or unimportant if it is something you want to know. Below are a few links that might help you gather more information or answer other questions while you are here.

theschoolhouseatmutianyu.com The Schoolhouse website where you can find most of the information you need to know.

hostelworld.com This website can help you find and book a hostel for your days off.

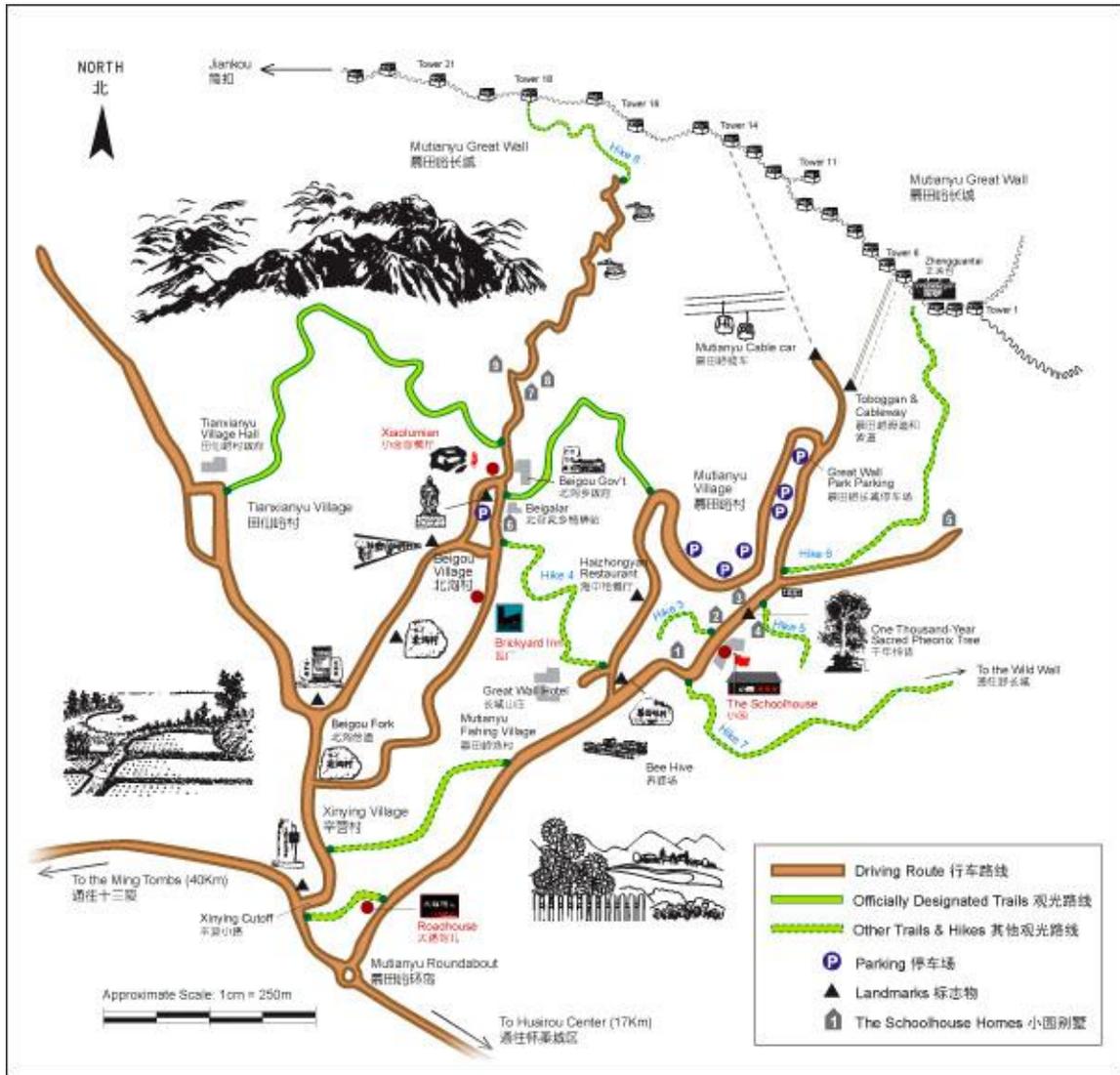
mutianyugreatwall.net The Mutianyu Great Wall website, where you can get information about the Wall and the village.

chinainternship2012.blog.com A blog I kept during my internship that may give you more of an idea of day-to-day life.

www.theschoolhouseatmutianyu.com/Internship_Feedback_Gueho.pdf Audrey Gueho's report on her experience as an intern.

bjsubway.com The Beijing subway website.

APPENDIX 1: MAP



APPENDIX 2: CHINESE VOCABULARY

Below is a list of words which may be useful to learn before interning at the Schoolhouse. Because many of the staff do not speak English, learning some Chinese is key for communication! Additionally, many of your co-workers are actually really great people if you make the effort to get to know them. Thus, learning some simple words can strengthen solidarity, and make the experience much more fun! Plus, who wouldn't want to show off some Chinese to their friends and family back home?

The table below makes use of "Pinyin", which is the official system used to transcribe Chinese characters into latin script. As you may not be familiar with this system, I would highly recommend you listen to how the Pinyin is pronounced here: <http://www.quickmandarin.com/chinesepinyinintable/>

Remember: Patience is a virtue when learning Chinese. Good luck - and most of all - have fun!!

ENGLISH MEANING	CHINESE PRONUNCIATION (PINYIN)
Greetings/general sayings	
Hello	nǐhǎo
Goodbye	zàijiàn
Thank you	xiè xiè
You are welcome	búyòng kèqi
Sorry	duìbuqǐ/bùhǎoyìsi
Pronouns	
I	wǒ
You	nǐ
He ; she (spoken the same, written differently)	tā ; tā
Plural (e.g. wǒ mén = us, tā mén = them)	mén
Possession (e.g. wǒ de = my, nǐ de = your)	de
Work/on-the-job	
Go to work	shàngbān
Finish work	xiàbān
Cheque/bill	mǎidān
sheet/list (e.g. reservation sheet)	dānzǐ
Do you have a reservation?	yǒu yùdìng ma?

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Wait a moment	shāoděng yíxià
Driver ; how to address the driver	sījī ; shīfu
Phone; cell phone	diànhuà ; shǒujī
I will call you	wǒ gěi nǐ dǎ diànhuà
Let's go	zǒu ba
House	fángzi
Room	fángjiān
What time	jǐ diǎn
How many People	jǐwèi
Key	yàoshi
How much \$	duōshǎo qián
Take away (for plates on the table)	shōu
Rest/day off	xiūxi
Bathroom	cèsuǒ
Car	chē

Places at the Schoolhouse you should know

Schoolhouse	xiǎoyuán
Brickyard	wǎchǎng
Xiaolumian	xiǎolùmiàn
Roadhouse	dàlùguǎn
Artroom	měishùshì
Classroom	jiàoshì
Meeting room	huìyìshì
Office	bàngōngshì
The shop (with cashier)	xiǎomàibù
Kitchen	chúfáng
Terrace	yángtái

Food

Eat food	chīfàn
Order food	diǎncài
Drink beverages	hē yǐnliào
Rice	mǐfàn
Beef ; Pork ; Chicken	Niúròu ; zhūròu ; jīròu
Vegetables	shūcài
Spoon	sháozi
Fork	chāzi
Chopsticks	kuàizi
I'm Hungry	wǒ è le
Iced water	bīng shuǐ
Ice	bīngkuài
Menu	càidān

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Like (e.g. I like to eat beef)	xǐhuan
Want (e.g. I want to eat chicken)	xiǎng
Yummy/delicious	hǎochī

Language related

I don't know	wǒ bù zhī dào
I don't speak Chinese	wǒ bú huì shuō zhōngwén
Do you speak English?	nǐ huì shuō yīngwén ma?
Let me pass the phone to someone who speaks Chinese.	wǒ qǐng jiǎng zhōngwén de rén lái jiē

Generally useful

Want ; don't want	yào ; búyào
Have ; don't have	

yǒu ; méiyǒu

Yes ; No	duì ; búduì
Good ; Bad	hǎo ; bùhǎo
The same ; similar	yíyàng ; chàbuduō
Okay/alright/not bad	hái kěyǐ
is/am	shì
in/at/on (e.g. I live in America)	zài
Can ; cannot	kěyǐ ; bù kěyǐ

Question words

What	shénme
Why	wèishénme
When	shénme shíhou
How	zěnmé
How long (regarding time)	duōjiǔ
Who	shéi
Where	nǎr
How much	duōshǎoqián

Numbers

1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	yī, èr, sān, sì, wǔ, liù, qī, bā, jiǔ, shí
100	bǎi
1000	qiān

Any other number

Chinese numbers are simple! They are expressed in number of 1000s, 100s, 10s and units. E.g. 36 is expressed as 3,10, 6 = sān shí liù. 529 is expressed as 5,100, 2.10, 9 = wǔ bǎi èr shí jiǔ

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Measure word, spoken after the number when
expressing a quantity of items (e.g. 3 spoons = sān gè
gè sháozi)

2 (when saying 2 items, replace èr with liǎng, e.g. 2
spoons = liǎng gè sháozi)

0 líng

1 (for Phone numbers, replace yī with yāo, e.g. the
phone number 1234 = yāo èr sān sì)

Time

Today

jīntiān

Tomorrow

míngtiān

Yesterday

zuótiān

Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun

xīngqī yī/èr/sān/sì/wǔ/liù/tiān (e.g.
Thursday = xīngqī sì)

Directions

Left ; Right

zuǒ ; yòu

Go straight

yìzhízhǒu/wǎngqiánzǒu

Front ; Back

qiánmiàn ; hòumian

Inside ; Outside

lǐmiàn ; wàibiān

North ; East ; South ; West

běi ; dōng ; nán ; xī

Walk

zǒulù

Subway/metro train

dìtiězhàn

Meeting people

My name is...

wǒ jiào...

I am ... years old

wǒ...suì le

I am American (for example)

wǒ shì měiguó rén

How are you?

nǐ hǎo ma?

I am very good

wǒ hěn hǎo

And you?

nǐ ne

What is your name?

nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?