

Beijing Capital International Airport: The Pillar of the Asian Skies

By March 3, 1958, China's Beijing International Capital Airport's fixed assets comprised of a small building, that served as the terminal, and a couple meters of runway. It was a day old. Come January 1, 1980 a new and larger green building opened to house 12 airplanes, making it a shooting star in the sky compared to then established American and European airports. Today, the airport handles over 1520 aircraft movements each day as its annual passenger turnover stands at over 82 million.



Scaling up Standards

Ambitious expansion plans such as Norman Foster's Terminal 3 which incorporates Chinese traditions and beliefs such as good luck, symbolized by the red roof, have catapulted the airport to the second position in terms of global rankings. With over 513,000 feet of runway shared (not equally) amongst three terminals, this is the largest and busiest airport in Asia and the hub of major global airlines.

The airport can handle some of the world's biggest aircrafts such as Airbus A380, sparking the sprout out of an array of auxiliary businesses which include terminal 3's scores of food stores, tens of duty free shops, banks, shopping malls, Internet service, transport and car hire companies as well as exchange bureaus and Asian gift centers.



Service Delivery Credentials

Though big dreams come at a price, Beijing Capital International Airport is not amongst the airports that suffer apparent security lapses or signs of inefficiency owing to passenger and luggage processing hiccups. Terminal 3 alone commands 3.2 million square feet of transportation area, beefed up with a car park that can hold up to 7000 vehicles. For the sake of efficiency, the terminal is as well graced with 243

elevators, moving walkways and escalators as all restrooms are fitted with diaper changing sections not forgetting architectural designs that make the physically challenged feel at home.

At Beijing International Airport, security is paramount. For example, Terminal 3's \$ 240 million luggage mill section is monitored by over 200 top grade security cameras as the system churns out about 19,000 pieces of luggage in an hour. This enables passengers in the arrival terminal to get their luggage processed and handed over to them in less than five minutes. Top of the notch X-ray scanners and other security devices make the airport a red spot for terrorists and drug traffickers as beautiful indoor gardens around the waiting area mesmerize travelers with no harmful agendas. The best way to experience the expansive waiting area's natural aesthetics is to take a comfortable mini train as you wait for your flight's confirmation through the airports tallest monitoring tower that stands at 323 feet or 98.3 meters.



Transport in and Out of the Airport

If you've been to airports that require more than an hour to step outside of their precincts and enjoy the rest of the world, Beijing International Airport is not one of them. This is because an overwhelming number of taxis and buses that are operated by Chinese and international car hire companies are always on standby 24/7. As a result, jetting in and out of Beijing is as easy as counting to three and as safe as taking a VIP walk through Fort Knox.

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