



Forbidden City

fact sheet

The Forbidden City (also known officially as the Imperial Palace Museum) was commissioned by the third Emperor of the Ming Dynasty, Emperor Yong Le. The palace was built between 1406 and 1420, but was burnt down, rebuilt, sacked and renovated countless times, so most of the architecture you can see today dates from the 1700's and onwards. The Forbidden City was the seat of Imperial power for 500 years. The total area of the complex is 183 acres. Altogether there are 9,999 rooms in the Museum, not all of which can be visited.



The Imperial Palace is an example of rectangular architecture. It is 961 metres long from south to north and 753 metres wide. Combined to keep out intruders, there is a 10 metre high city wall and 52 metre wide moat around the perimeter. The combined area of the palace and its defences totals 724,250 square metres.

The Palace was once the home of the Emperor up until the revolution of 1911. Out-of-bounds to the common person in the street, the Palace therefore became known as the Forbidden City.



Everything which is located within the walls of the Palace has significance, from the colour of the rooves, the shape of the buildings and the number of lion carvings on the corners of the buildings. Pay attention to the use of yellow, the number 9 and the raised pathways, reserved only for the feet of the emperor. The Palace has been marvellously restored to its former glory.

