



## Beijing Hikers

北京爱山国际

Sun Huijie gave up her dream of becoming a fashion designer to operate a family owned, outdoor-activity company, Beijing Hikers, in 2003. More than a decade later, working in an industry, which at one time she knew so little about, is her passion.

"I believe this is my life's path, and I love it. I feel fulfilled when hikers smile after they have been hiking with us. I never want to disappoint them, so I always keep exploring new trails and new places," Sun says.

Beijing Hikers, a family run business, has been organizing hikes

and expeditions around Beijing, and greater China, since 2001.

Sun's sister, Sun Huilin, and her sister's husband, Gary Pinnegar, decided to immigrate to Australia in 2003, but they did not want to close their company. Instead, they asked Sun Huijie to take over.

"The business was doing well, because it was something new in Beijing. Still, they could not find anyone suitable to run it. When my sister asked me, I hesitated at first. I had never hiked before, and I was more interested in the art and fashion scene. But I thought, why not? Let's give it a go," Sun Huijie says.

It took her nearly three months to become a certified guide. Also, she had to reside at her sister's apartment to practice her English. "The training to become a guide was intense; I attended guiding courses, and I went on all of our trails. I was not strong enough ... but slowly I grew stronger. I had to memorize many of the treks around the hills of Beijing. Gary said to me before they left, 'Huijie, do not be nervous that you cannot speak perfect English. People will understand. But if you get lost, people won't come back,'" Sun Huijie recalls.

From the beginning, Beijing Hikers has mainly focused on expats in Beijing. Today, though, people from all backgrounds use the company's services, and the Chinese clientele continues to grow.

"Chinese people do not see hiking as a form of relaxation; instead, (they think of it) as hard work for



the body and soul. Holidays in China are about staying at home, getting a massage, watching movies or eating delicious food. That is the way people relax here. However, we are starting to see more Chinese students and middle-class Chinese joining our hikes. They understand the benefits of outdoor activities, and they are tired of just shopping as a form of leisure. I see this change as a positive trend," Sun Huijie says.

The hikes offered by Beijing Hikers are not only excursions in Beijing, but also to famous scenic and remote areas in other regions of China. "We are proudly independent, and we do not accept commissions or any other forms of kickbacks. We welcome anyone. I hope that after five years we will be the leading company in outdoor activities, and that more Chinese people will participate in our hikes. I believe being a part of nature is so important for human beings, and for the soul. You forget the pressure of life and work ... if you end up in remote places, you realize that only in the city you are somebody, in the desert, you are nobody," says Sun Huijie.



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## King's Joy

京兆尹

King's Joy provides not only excellent food and a great environment, but also an idea of good health. The restaurant is built in one of the most beautiful courtyards in Beijing. The courtyard was designed by Zhang Yonghe, a famous Chinese architect. The restaurant's chef, Pan Jianjun, was a disciple at the Donglin Monastery, a Buddhist temple in Jiangxi Province. Pan was encouraged by his master to promote vegetarian food.

King's Joy offers vegetarian food, but not the restrictive, monastic food that prohibits leeks, garlic, onions, chives and other pungent ingredients. The food is full of flavor, and many vegetables come from nearby organic farms. However, some harder-to-find vegetables come from Southwest China's Yunnan Province.



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