



# THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

BY JAKE TRAN

# WHY WAS THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA BUILT

- For millennia, Chinese leaders instituted wall-building projects to protect the land from northern, nomadic invaders. One surviving section of such an ancient wall, in the Shandong province, is made of hard-packed soil called “rammed earth” and is estimated to be 2,500 years old. For centuries during the Warring States Period, before China was unified into one nation, such walls defended the borders.
- Around 220 B.C.E., Qin Shi Huang, also called the First Emperor, united China. He masterminded the process of uniting the existing walls into one. At that time, rammed earth and wood made up most of the wall. Emperor after emperor strengthened and extended the wall, often with the aim of keeping out the northern invaders. In some places, the wall was constructed of brick. Elsewhere, quarried granite or even marble blocks were used. The wall was continuously brought up to date as building techniques advanced.
- Zhu Yuanzhang, who became the Hongwu Emperor, took power in 1368 C.E. The Ming emperors improved the wall with watchtowers and platforms. Most of the familiar images of the wall show Ming-era construction in the stone. Depending on how the wall is measured, it stretches somewhere between 4,000 and 5 500 kilometers (2 500 and 3 400 miles)



# HOW DID THEY BUILD THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

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- The first Emperor of Qin ordered 300,000 soldiers to build the wall and peasants were also used to supplement the labour force. Builders of the wall always tried to use local resources, so the walls that crossed mountains were made from stone, and the walls that crossed the plains were made from rammed earth.
- The much later Ming Dynasty built a stronger wall by using more bricks and stone instead of rammed earth like some of the first phases. They used lime mortar, and the workers built brick and cement factories with local materials near the wall.
- Over the ages, the wall used around 100 million tonnes of brick, stone, and mud. An impressive feat for a structure that was built before modern construction machinery. It was transported in a variety of ways: by hand, shoulder or back; wheel barrows and ropes; and animals, including camels, horses and even goats.



# CLOSE UP OF THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

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- Here are some links to see The Great Wall of China close up
- <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/igVxCi6iJJ6CrA>
- Here is a picture (a bit of it) of The Great Wall of China from space.

