



CHINA'S FORBIDDEN CITY

Facts for your success

- ▶ Exclusive access to the largest palace complex in the world
- ▶ New findings on last empress and fall of Forbidden City
- ▶ Glossy drama elements created with sumptuous costumes and authentic props

CHINA'S FORBIDDEN CITY

It was the inner sanctum and pulsating heart of the Chinese Empire. Today it is modern China's greatest tourist attraction: Beijing's Forbidden City. A unique complex of structures reflecting a hierarchy of divine and imperial power, it bore witness not only to spectacular ceremonies and grandiose triumphs, but also to squalid intrigues and humiliating defeats. As Beijing welcomes the world to the 2008 Olympics, the Forbidden City opens its doors to the mysteries and legends that fill its countless rooms and passageways.

This two-part, high-caliber program is the gold standard of documentaries on this magical site, and focuses on two major turning points. The first part, "The Center of the World," transports us to the reign of Emperor Yongle in the 15th century, the most cosmopolitan period of the Ming Dynasty. Having usurped the throne, Yongle had to rely on his court eunuchs to administer the Empire. Though robbed of their manhood, the eunuchs rose to occupy the highest posts in the Empire, effectively controlling the "center of the world."

This fascinating look at the imperial eunuchs is followed by "The Reign of the Concubine," which showcases Cixi, the fabled Dowager Empress of the late 19th century. A simple concubine, she became the most powerful woman at court, a masterful manipulator of the power structures of the Forbidden City. Cixi was the ruler of the Middle Kingdom in 1900 when the Empire suffered its final, humiliating defeat in the Boxer Rebellion and through the invasion of the colonial powers – the end of the dream of empire.

This docudrama contains rare shots from inside the Forbidden City made possible through the exclusive cooperation with China Central Television. Other interiors were filmed in the Hengdian Studios near Shanghai, where the palace was recreated in full size. Hundreds of actors and extras with sumptuous costumes and authentic props reenact historical scenes. CGI animation shows how Feng Shui and Yin and Yang dictated the design of the palaces. "China's Forbidden City" – an exploration that opens a thousand doors and a thousand secrets!



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| Documentaries | |
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| Format | 2 x 52' HD |
| Producer | Gruppe 5 Filmproduktion for ZDF and ZDF Enterprises GmbH |
| Co-Producer | ARTE, SBS |
| Executive Producer | Uwe Kersken |

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