

# DESTINATION INFORMATION FOR CHINA

## What You Need to Know Before You Go

### PASSPORT AND VISA INFORMATION

In order to enter China, as a citizen of Canada, you will need: A signed, valid passport and tourist visa that must be obtained prior to departure.

Your passport must remain valid for at least 6 months beyond the completion of your trip. It is also imperative that your passport has at least 2 blank visa pages available for entry and exit stamps. Additional blank pages are always a prudent precaution.

### GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TRAVEL ADVISORIES

The Government of Canada provides country specific information sheets for every country in the world, including travel alerts and warnings. Find this information on line at; <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/china>

### CURRENCY

**China's** unit of currency is the Renminbi.

Exchange money only at authorized outlets such as currency exchange kiosks, banks and hotels. Only exchange what you feel you will need while visiting. Save all receipts from any currency transaction. Major credit cards are generally accepted at shops, hotels and restaurants.

### HEALTH

It is a good idea to read up on any health issues or concerns related to your destination. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers current health information; it can be reached at 800-232-4636 or online at [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel).

### WEATHER

**China:** With its vast size, China has quite a variety of temperatures and precipitation. The north is generally cooler than the south, and the west is more extreme than the eastern coastal areas. Use a website such as [weather.com](http://weather.com) to find average temperatures and rainfall during your travel times.

### ELECTRICITY

**China** supply electricity at 220 volts / 50 hertz. Voltage converters and adapter plugs may be purchased from our partner, The Travel Outfitter by New Headings, at [www.abercrombiekent.com/travel\\_store](http://www.abercrombiekent.com/travel_store) or at most retail luggage stores.

### WHAT TO PACK

Daytime attire: Comfortable, casual clothing in natural, breathable fabrics that can be layered in cool weather or air-conditioning. Long shorts are acceptable for men and women.

Evening attire: Somewhat smarter but casual clothing is appropriate for big city or resort restaurants. Formal clothing is not necessary.

Comfortable walking shoes with low or no heels.

Sweater or lightweight jacket.

Lightweight raincoat or poncho.

Swimming suit.

Sunglasses, sunscreen or sunhat.

Lightweight binoculars.

Simple first-aid kit. Prescriptions and medications (We recommend you carry these in their original bottles and/or packaging.)

Charging cables for electronics. Voltage converter and adapter plugs.

Note: Laundry and dry cleaning service is available at all your hotels.

## Baggage Restrictions

On Internal Air flights within the People's Republic of China, each passenger is limited to approximately 44 pounds of checked baggage in Economy Class, approximately 66 pounds in Business Class and approximately 88 pounds in First Class.

For carry-on baggage, passengers are allowed one piece of baggage for Economy and Business Class, and two pieces for First Class. Each piece is limited to a maximum weight of approximately 10 pounds and dimensions of 7 inches x 15 inches x 21 inches.

Luggage restrictions on high-speed "bullet" trains in China are 44 pounds of checked baggage per person. Total dimensions of any single piece of luggage are not to exceed 63 inches.

As a preventative measure, it is recommended that all luggage be secured with a TSA approved lock.

## What You Need to Know When You Arrive

### TIME ZONES

**China** operates on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) + 8 hours.

At 9:00 a.m. in China, it is:

EST	8:00 p.m. the previous day
CST	7:00 p.m. the previous day
MST	6:00 p.m. the previous day
PST	5:00 p.m. the previous day

Note that China does not observe daylight savings time, so adjust the above times accordingly.

### LANGUAGE

**China:** Mandarin Chinese is the official language; there are also many regional dialects including Cantonese, Mongolian and Manchurian. Please consult with your guide on translations, if needed.

### AIRPORT INFORMATION

At international airports in Mainland China, passengers cannot be met inside secured areas. This includes Immigration, Customs halls and Baggage Claim. Your tour guide will greet you as you exit these restricted areas.

Please be aware that there are no airport porters in China.

## PROTECTION AND PRECAUTIONS

Use the safes where available in your accommodations to secure your valuables, especially passports, medications, jewelry, money and electronics. If you must carry valuables, keep them on your person at all times. Be mindful of your surroundings and take extra caution in crowds.

Photocopy the personal information pages of your passport; leave one copy with a family member or friend and pack another separately from the passport itself. You may want to scan and email a copy to yourself for easy, online access. This will help you to quickly secure a replacement should the need arise.

As a preventative measure, it is recommended that all luggage be secured with a TSA approved lock.

## ETIQUETTE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Unless you are shooting a crowded public scene, it is considered courteous to ask permission before taking pictures of local people, especially small children. Please be respectful of local people who do not care to be photographed.

Photography is not permitted at some locations, which may include government buildings, museums, art galleries, private houses, etc. These areas are usually clearly marked. If in doubt, please ask; this will avoid having your camera confiscated.

Be sure to pack ample amounts of batteries and memory cards or film for your camera and video equipment, along with the appropriate charging cables. A dustproof case or sealable plastic bags and lens brush are also recommended.

## FOOD AND DRINK

Do not use tap water for drinking or brushing your teeth. Even "purified" water in open containers should be avoided. It is always preferable and safer to use only bottled water.

Regardless of precautions, changes in water and diet can result in mild abdominal upsets and nausea. To prevent serious illness, avoid suspect foods such as uncooked vegetables, peeled fruit, unpasteurized milk and milk products. Beware of any food or drink sold by street vendors.

## SHOPPING

Many guests enjoy the chance to purchase items that reflect their destination, and so as a courtesy, your guide may recommend a particular shop or arrange a shopping visit. Please note, however, that these recommendations should not be taken as tour company or tour guide's endorsement of the shop, merchandise and/or pricing. You assume all responsibility for any transactions that take place, including shipping arrangements that are made.

The decision to shop while travelling is a personal choice and shopping is never compulsory. If at any point during your journey you feel pressured to shop or make purchases, please immediately discuss the matter with your tour guide.

In China, most stores offer fixed prices; in the free markets, bargaining is accepted and expected.

To avoid disappointment, we suggest the following guidelines:

- Compute the exchange rate and thoroughly review credit card receipts before signing.
- Take your purchases home with you whenever possible. Airfreight can take many months and actual shipping charges can be excessive. Customs delays, fees and regulations can further complicate the issue. If you choose to ship purchases, we suggest taking a picture of the item(s) and/or marking them in some way to ensure you receive what was purchased. For example, you could write your name on the backside of a rug. Determine if your shipment will be delivered door-to-door or to the nearest customs facility, as is often the case. Most goods shipped from other countries to Canada are subject to Customs duty.

- Duty taxes, if applicable, are paid as you re-enter Canada. Regardless of assurances by merchants, these cannot be prepaid on your behalf. Currently, each person is entitled to an \$800 duty-free exemption, however, may only bring one liter of alcoholic beverages, 200 cigarettes and 100 cigars.
- Keep all sales receipts for items purchased throughout your trip and try to pack all items that you will need to declare together. This will ease the Customs process upon re-entry into Canada.

Consult Canada Border Services Agency website for more details. <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html>

## COMMUNICATIONS

Contact your cellular telephone provider to determine if your phone operates on the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) and what, if any, activation may be required.

If your phone is not GSM-enabled, you may find that renting a phone specifically designed for use overseas is the most practical option.

In Asia, reception on any cell phone can be unreliable and unpredictable, and in some locations it is not possible at all.

Due to government regulations, please be aware some internet websites are not accessible in Mainland China. Currently banned sites include, but are not limited to, Google, gmail, Facebook, YouTube, the New York Times and Whatsapp. Please be aware the list of banned sites is subject to change without notice.

## TIPPING GUIDELINES

### Small Group Journeys

All gratuities for entire trip is at \$39 per passenger for a one time charge by the first tour guide at Beijing.