

📍 Great Wall of China

Trip Notes: China

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

US citizens must obtain a visa prior to arrival and have a passport with at least six months' validity. We recommend applying for a ten-year multiple entry visa, useful for repeated travel, or trips to Hong Kong or Macau with returns to China.

PRIOR TO ARRIVAL

Visitors to China must complete arrival information declarations in advance through official channels such as the [National Immigration Administration website](#), government service platforms or the Immigration Bureau App.

At ports of entry, digital options including QR code scanning and smart device entry remain available, while official paper arrival cards are retained as a supplementary channel to accommodate diverse passenger preferences.

VACCINATIONS

No shots are required for US visitors entering China. Malaria is present in some areas of China. Please check with your travel clinic for their recommendation based on your personal health history.

CURRENCY

The renminbi is the official currency of the People's Republic of China. The yuan (sign: ¥) is the basic unit of the renminbi, but is also used to refer to the Chinese currency generally. One yuan is subdivided into 10 ji, and a ji in turn is subdivided into 10 fēn.

Currency converters apps for iPhone, iPad, Android, Windows and Firefox can be found at www.xe.com/apps.

CREDIT CARDS

Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted, American Express less so. Cash is needed for shopping at street markets.

TIME DIFFERENCE

Beijing and Shanghai are 13 hours ahead of US Eastern Standard Time and 16 hours ahead of US Pacific Standard Time..

SHOPPING

Beware of buying fake jewelry, especially jade. Even certificates which state that the jewelry is real can be fake! Knock off items such as purses and watches are sold at markets, and the quality ranges from almost impossible to discern from the real thing, to patently fake. Items sold in museum gift shops are reliably authentic.



📍 Gate of Divine Prowess, Forbidden City



📍 Terracotta Warriors



📍 Beijing

POWER

China operates on 240 volts and the plug type is I. For more information on plugs and voltage, please visit <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/>

LANGUAGE

Mandarin is spoken by 70% of the population, but there are as many as 292 living languages in China. English is spoken by people on the tourist sector in major cities, especially by younger people, but is not generally understood in rural areas, or by older people.

CLIMATE

In the north, the climate is temperate, around 70F in summer, with very cold winters. In the south, it is subtropical with very hot summers and mild winters. In the summer, monsoons blow huge rain showers in from the east, while in the winter, dry and cold winds come from the northwest.

PHONES

To dial China from the US: 011 + 86 + number
To dial the US from China: 001 + 1 + area code + number.

TIPPING

Tipping is expected and appreciated. As a guideline, a private guide receives \$5 per day from each person in your party, a group or local guide receives \$2 per day from each person in your party, and a driver receives \$1 per day from each person in your party. Porters and housekeepers receive \$1.

ETIQUETTE

Chinese people generally dislike being touched by strangers. Clicking fingers or whistling is considered rude. Never put your feet on a desk or a chair. To beckon a Chinese person, face the palm of your hand downward and move your fingers in a scratching motion. Never use your index finger to beckon anyone. Chinese point with an open hand. Never point with your index finger.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

For a China packing list, focus on layers, comfortable walking shoes, and versatile clothing for diverse climates, plus essentials like a VPN, power bank, adapter, personal medication, and toiletries (especially feminine hygiene products, as they're hard to find). Don't forget essential documents (passport/visa), copies of documents, some cash (Yuan), a daypack, and sun/rain protection, adapting for seasonal weather extremes from cold north to hot, humid south.

SAFETY & SECURITY

Traveling to China can be an exciting and culturally rich experience, offering everything from vibrant cities to stunning natural landscapes. Overall, China is considered a safe destination for most travelers, with low violent crime rates and well-developed transportation networks. Still, it's important to stay aware of your surroundings, keep valuables secure in crowded areas, and follow local laws and regulations, which can be stricter than in some other countries. Staying connected through a reliable VPN, keeping emergency contacts handy, and monitoring local news can also help ensure a smooth and secure trip.



📍 Giant Buddha, Leshan



📍 Tiananmen Square



📍 Summer Palace, Beijing

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2026

- 1 January - **New Year's Day**
- 16-23 February - **Chinese New Year**
- 5 April - **Qingming Festival**
- 1 - 5 May - **Labor Day**
- 27 May - **Hari Raya Haji**
- 19 - 21 June - **Dragon Boat Festival**
- 25-27 September - **Mid-Autumn Festival**
- 1 - 7 October - **National Day/Golden Week**

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

[**US State Department Travel Advisories**](#)

[**U.S. Embassy and Consulates in China**](#)

[**Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)**](#)

[**US Passports**](#)

[**International Travel Guidance**](#)

This information is provided by Travel Answers as a guideline to the country you will be visiting. Further information is available to you at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/China.html>. While Travel Answers endeavors to provide current information, regulations and requirements can change without notice and we are not responsible for travelers whose trips are interrupted due to documentary or medical non-compliance.