China Travel Tips

The following tips are designed to provide you with some basic information on China and to remind you of how we can be reached for assistance while you are on the traveling in China.

DRESS CODE FOR BUSINESS VISITS

For formalities sake, please find below a general guideline for appropriate business casual dress during business visits as well as for other planned events such as networking and speaking events in China. As you would expect, there will be no surprises. In general, business casual dress code for business visits and other planned events is the same as in the United States. Since no dress code can cover all contingencies, visitors should exercise a certain amount of judgment in choosing their attire. Please consider climate conditions when planning your travel wardrobe. If you have any other questions about acceptable dress code, please check with your ChinaSense host.

Slacks and Suit Pants
As you would wear at home, reasonably colored and patterned cotton, wool, blended or synthetic fabric slacks and suit pants are appropriate. As you would expect, inappropriate pants include jeans, exercise pants, shorts, Bermuda shorts, bib overalls, leggings, and any spandex or other form-fitting pants such as bike clothing.

Skirts, Dresses, and Skirted Suits
Similar to dress codes at home, reasonably colored and patterned casual dresses and skirts are acceptable. As a guideline, skirts or dresses that are split at or below the knee are acceptable. Dress and skirt length should be no shorter than four inches above the knee, or a length at which you can sit comfortably in public. Short, tight skirts that ride up the thigh are inappropriate for business visits. Similarly, mini-skirts, shorts, sun dresses, beach dresses, and spaghetti-strap dresses are also inappropriate for these occasions.
Shirts, Tops, Blouses, and Jackets
As before, the use of reasonably colored and patterned fabrics should be a general guideline. Long and short sleeve casual shirts, polo-styled shirts, dress shirts, sweaters, and turtlenecks are acceptable. Suit jackets or sport jackets are also acceptable attire for visits. As you would again expect, inappropriate attire includes tank tops, collarless shirts, tops with bare shoulders, sweatshirts, midriff and halter tops and any top with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, cartoons, or slogans. T-shirts, unless worn under another blouses, shirts, jackets, or jumpers, are also not acceptable dress.

Shoes and Footwear
Loafers, boots, flats, fashion clogs, conservative athletic shoes, sneakers, dress heels, and leather deck shoes are acceptable. Wearing no stockings is acceptable if the look is appropriate to the outfit. Flashy athletic shoes, thongs, flip-flops, slippers, sandals and any shoe with an open toe are not acceptable in the office. Closed toe and closed heel shoes are required in operational manufacturing areas.

Jewelry, Makeup, Perfume, and Cologne
As in the US, fashion accessories, make-up and scents should be in good taste. Both US and Chinese professionals avoid visible body piercing other than pierced ears.

Hats and Head Covering
Caps (and hats) are not appropriate for office business visits in China. Head covers that are required for religious purposes or to honor cultural traditions are allowed.

DOCUMENTS, PASSPORT AND VISA
Your travel documents, passports and visas are your responsibility. A valid passport and visa are required for all travelers to China. A minimum visa is a single entry tourist visa. Your passport must be valid for 6 months after your return.
LUGGAGE

On your transpacific flight, baggage is limited to two pieces of luggage, the combined total dimensions of both bags not to exceed 106 inches, and no one piece may be larger than 62 inches or exceed 50 lbs. Total combined dimensions for carry-on luggage may not exceed 45 inches. Within China, free baggage allowance is 44 lbs. per person. For overweight luggage for internal flights within China, you will have to pay 1.5% of the face value of the economy flight ticket for each 2 pounds.

On domestic flights within China the overhead compartments may be smaller than you are accustomed to. Carry on only small handbags and be prepared to check the rest of your luggage. It is strongly recommended that all checked pieces have a lock. This is a requirement for domestic flights but will also help in deterring petty theft of your belongings on domestic flights within China.

Do not forget that your carry-on piece should contain whatever you will need for one night, including toiletries and a change of clothing.

Train luggage requirements:
1. Two-Piece Limit: Each passenger may bring aboard no more than two pieces of carry-on baggage. Not included in this limit are personal items such as briefcases, purses, laptops, and infant paraphernalia such as strollers, diaper bags and car seats.
2. 40-Pound Limit: Each carry-on bag may weigh no more than 40 lbs.
3. Size Limit: Each carry-on bag may not exceed 28x22x14 inches in size.
4. Visible Tag Required: Each carry-on bag must be visibly tagged with the name and address of the passenger. Passengers may use their own personal identification tags.

BE SURE TO PUT RED “CHINASENSE” TAGS ON YOUR CHECK-IN LUGGAGE. WE WILL PICK UP YOUR LUGGAGE FOR YOU BY IDENTIFYING THESE TAGS!
CUSTOMS AND REGULATIONS

A customs card, health declaration form and entry card must be filled out by all travelers entering China. These will be provided on the plane prior to arrival. Also a separate departure card and a custom declaration form will be necessary to depart China. This will be provided at the airport during your departure transfer prior to the immigration station.

Special permission is needed to bring in 16mm and 3/4" video cameras. Tourists may carry 8mm or 1/2" video cameras without approval, provided that all films and tapes are for private and not commercial use.

CLIMATE

China has wide seasonal variations similar to North America. In the central and northern regions (Beijing), expect cold winters and hot, humid summers - similar to New York City. In many areas, the summer is hot and rainy with high humidity levels while the winter is dry. In northern China, most of the rainfall occurs during the summer months. The rainy season for China generally falls between the months of July and August. Southern China has a sub-tropical climate and the rainfall is generally distributed throughout the year. The winters in this part of China are short with cooler temperatures.

PACKING TIPS

Clothing: Sightseeing in China involves plenty of walking so comfortable shoes and clothing is essential. Hotel restaurants range from coffee shops to elegant dining rooms where the dress varies from casual to semi-formal. We recommend that you dress according the layer method. Bring along clothing that will allow you to add or subtract a layer if you become too hot or cold, especially for your excursion to the Great Wall, where altitude makes the temperature cooler than in Beijing.
Toilet Articles and Medicine: Public rest rooms, including non-hotel restaurants, often do not provide toilet paper and thus small packs of tissues are handy, as well as anti-bacterial gel. Hotels will provide standard amenities, including soap and shampoo, but the quality may not be satisfactory, so pack accordingly. Please bring your own contact lens solutions, cosmetics and feminine hygiene products. Carry your prescriptions with you and pack all medications in your hand luggage. Don’t forget over-the-counter products like aspirin, cold remedies, decongestants and cures for intestinal trouble.

Food: Full-day sightseeing in China will usually include a lunch stop in a local Chinese restaurant. Dining is family-style, with a variety of courses laid out on a “lazy-susan”. The flavor is quite different from Chinese food overseas, and the menu will regularly include soups, vegetarian, meat and seafood dishes - so most everyone will find at least 1 or 2 courses to their liking. Hotel breakfasts will usually be buffet style with Chinese and Western offerings. Most places offer plenty of bakery items, eggs, meats, fruits and yogurt. Chinese breakfast includes rice porridge and savory steamed buns. For dinner, hotel restaurants provide a choice of international food, everything from burgers and club sandwiches to spaghetti and veal. Gourmet Chinese venues usually focus on regional cooking and specialty dishes. If you think you might not enjoy the local lunches, eat a big breakfast each day and pack some snack foods.

Miscellaneous: Bring a small umbrella, alarm clock, zip-lock bags, bottle opener, corkscrew, and photocopies of your passport, plane tickets and land vouchers. These will come in handy in case you lose the originals.

WHAT TO EXPECT

There is so much to see and do in China! Your sightseeing days will be very full and involve a lot of walking. Again, bring comfortable shoes! Though you will have a plentiful lunch, you might want to bring along some snacks for the day. Additionally, at the tourist sights in China and in some restaurants, you will find that the toilets are non-western (meaning
without a toilet seat). Be sure to pack some tissue paper with you in case there is none in the bathroom.

**MONEY**

Credit cards are accepted at most hotels and government-run stores in the larger cities; Visa, MasterCard and American Express are the most common. In China and Singapore if you pay by credit card, the bank normally charges you 4% as service fee. You will have to use local currency in small local shops and in the “free markets”. Money is easily changed at your hotel, airports and Friendship Stores. The exchange rate is standard throughout the country so you can feel free to exchange money where it is most convenient for you. ATM machines are available in most major cities in China, however we do not depend on them, as often times they cannot connect to your local bank to complete the transaction. It is wise to keep all currency exchange receipts since you may need these at the end of your trip to exchange any “left over” cash back into US dollars. Additionally, you may want to bring some small denomination US cash ($1.00 bills), as many individual vendors at stops will accept it.

Local currency is the China New Yuan. The current exchange rate is approximately CNY7.72 = US$1.00 (1 SGD = 0.66 USD). Therefore, to estimate an item’s price shown in local currency of China, divide by 8 to calculate the approximate US dollar cost.

**TRANSPORTATION**

Taxis are relatively inexpensive; however do not count on drivers being able to speak English. Each hotel supplies “taxi cards”. These cards will allow us or your hotel to write where you need to go. When in doubt, the front desk will write your instructions in Chinese for each taxi driver. Please make sure that you remind the front desk to write the name of your
hotel in Chinese for your return ride home. **Please also take this ChinaSense Booklet with you.** It has all the Chinese names of places we may visit. Finding a return cab will not be difficult at hotels, Friendship Stores and other tourist spots. In other cases (for example, visiting a local market), arrange to have the cab wait for you. Generally you do not have to negotiate the fare with the driver, but make sure to ask the driver to give you the receipt, if it has the meter running. Unless you’re fluent in Chinese, do not count on using other forms of public transportation. A final note: with full day sightseeing, including stops for lunch and shopping, your schedule in China is very full. Most travelers do not find it necessary to even utilize the local transportation.

For those that speak some Chinese, buses are widely available, running from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Fares range from 1 RMB and up, and exact change is required. Again, do not expect the driver to speak English, so make sure you know the stops and bus numbers needed for your entire trip, especially the return to your hotel.

The Mass Transit Railway (MTR) is efficient, affordable and air-conditioned. A color-coded route map is available and simplifies navigation of this extensive and modern underground system. Fares range from 3.00 RMB to 5.00 RMB.

**DINING**

In China, most hotels utilize two separate twin beds for both single and double occupancy. Queen and king bedded rooms may be requested, but cannot be guaranteed prior to check in. The same is true for requesting adjoining rooms. Your rooms will feature private bath, telephone and TV, plus all the amenities and service expected in an international-class hotel. Hotels offer a choice of restaurants featuring a variety of international cuisine, bars, club lounges and a shopping arcade.

**WATER**
DO NOT drink tap water in China. Boiled or bottled water is provided in your hotel room. You should also buy a bottle of water or soda to take along on full-day sightseeing tours. Avoid ice cubes in local restaurants; instead, drink just the soda, beer or tea.

COMMUNICATIONS WHILE IN CHINA

Here are a few tips that will help you stay in touch with tour mates while in China.

1. Your GSM phones will work in China; however, roaming service will be very expensive.
2. Consider getting local Chinese cell phone service to keep in touch with each other while you’re in China. If you have an unlocked GSM phone, you can purchase a Chinese SIM card at the airport; by doing this, you can easy establish a rate-effective local phone number.
   − Please note some U.S. telco providers “lock” phones.
   − As a result, this type of phone will not work with a Chinese SIM card unless you ask your service to unlock your phone.
3. If you have a CDMA phone (Sprint and Verizon), you cannot use a SIM card.
   − It is possible to make arrangements for a rental cell phone.
     http://www.pandaphone.com is one of many suppliers of such services.
   − By searching the web, you can find a variety services that will deliver rental phones to your hotel (or your home, before you leave).

The above ideas are a convenience and not a necessity. If it’s too difficult to unlock your phones or rent, consider making sharing arrangements with those tour mates that establish local service.

There are also cost effective ways to stay in touch with home.

1. Since China’s Internet services are very advanced, your hotel will afford your laptops easy access to excellent Internet capabilities. As a result, you can use IM, e-mail and VoIP services (like Skype and
Vonage) to stay in touch.
− In the case of Skype or Vonage, you should plan ahead to make sure your laptop capabilities are well in place.
− Depending on your home time zone, time differences to home will be 12 to 15 hours during daylight savings. As a result, emails are a great way to stay in touch.

2. You can buy China-US calling cards via the Internet. 
http://www.ecallchina.com/default.asp?index=6 is an example of a reputable service provider

TELEPHONES

The hotels in major cities will allow convenient international communication. In most cases, you will have international direct-dial telephone service in your room. You will be responsible for the charges associated with any calls you make, so be sure that you are aware of the charges. The hotel business center can provide fax communication services for a nominal charge. To reach an AT&T USA Direct operator: dial 108-888 in Beijing. Your GSM cell phone will work in China provided that you have arranged for international calling prior to your departure. Use these for emergencies since rates are high for international use. Most 4 star above hotels offer broadband Internet connections. Typical charges are 100RMB per day. Some hotels offer free wireless Internet connections

MAIL

Post cards are widely available. You can purchase stamps and send correspondence from your hotel.

EXCESS BAGGAGE

If you wish to ship excess luggage back to your home country, you can use any of the major international package delivery services, such as DHL, FEDEX, UPS. Rates can be obtained in their websites.
Or, you can elect to bring your excess luggage with you on your flight and pay penalty. Penalty rates vary by destination and airlines. Contact your airline or your travel agent prior to your trip for specific charges.

**ELECTRONICS**

The voltage in **Mainland China** is 220 volts, 50 cycles. An adaptor is needed. The voltage in Hong Kong is 200/220 volts, 50 cycles. An adapter is needed.

**SHOPPING**

Notice: The summer hours for most Shanghai shopping malls are 9:00am to 21:00pm. Many larger and Tourism Appointed stores will accept credit card payment. Bringing some cash is always necessary in the event that you'd like to buy something from the street vendors.

**Singapore Shopping Areas:**

Marina Bay, Bugis, Chinatown, Geylang Serai,

Kampong Glam & Arab Street, Little India, North Bridge Road

Orchard, Riverside, Shenton Way and Raffles Place

**Shanghai Shopping Areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Name</th>
<th>Chinese Name</th>
<th>Distance from Hotel</th>
<th>Getting there by taxi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nanjing Road</td>
<td>南京路</td>
<td>0.5mi (0.8km)</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huaihai Road</td>
<td>淮海路</td>
<td>1.8mi (2.9km)</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkson Shopping Center</td>
<td>百盛购物中心</td>
<td>2.5 mi (4km)</td>
<td>18 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People's Square</td>
<td>人民广场</td>
<td>0.8 mi (1.3km)</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TIPPING

Tipping is no longer officially prohibited in China, as such local customs and expectations are changing. All tips are voluntary and at your discretion. Your local guides and bus drivers do appreciate the monetary gesture. The exact amount is entirely at your discretion. We offer the following guidelines in response to frequent requests. For the local guides there are two levels of tipping: if you are part of a large group in a coach you may tip $2.00 to $2.50 per person per day and a nominal amount for the bus driver; if you are in a private car or minivan with less than 10 people, you may wish to tip as much as $5.00 to $10.00 per person per day for the guide and slightly less for the driver. Most hotel restaurants and bars will automatically include a 15% gratuity.

### SECURITY

As in many destinations, petty theft can be a problem. Common sense should prevent any problems. Keep your money in a “fanny pack” or some other secure arrangement close to, and in front of your body. Men should not carry their wallet in a back pocket, and women should avoid carrying a purse over their shoulder where it can be easily taken. Avoid displaying large amounts of cash in public and do not leave valuables in plain sight in your hotel room during your absence. Each hotel offers a safety deposit box at the front desk for your valuables that you do not feel comfortable leaving in your hotel room.

### IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

http://www.chinasense.cn
Tel: 86.10.82825358 (China) 1.832.632.7288 (US)
1. Reconfirm your international flights 72 hours before departure.
2. Be sure that all your travel documents are in order: passport, visa, tickets and vouchers. Pack these documents in your carry-on luggage and keep them safe throughout your trip.
3. Make a photocopy of these documents and keep them in a safe and separate place. You might also wish to leave copies with friends or family back home. These will come in handy if you lose the original documents.
4. Arrive at the airport on time! Check-in for international flights is at least 2 hours before departure. Make sure that your luggage is checked through to the first city on your tour.
5. Pack wisely! Make sure that medications and other essentials are in your carry-on bag.
6. Also include a change of clothing in case your checked luggage is delayed. Don’t make your luggage too heavy to carry!

**BASIC CHINESE LANGUAGE PHRASES**

On January 1, 1979, the Chinese Government officially adopted the pinyin system for spelling Chinese names and places in Roman letters. A system of Romanization invented by the Chinese, pinyin has long been widely used in China on street and commercial signs as well as in elementary Chinese textbooks as an aid in learning Chinese characters. Variations of pinyin are also used as the written forms of several minority languages.

Pinyin has now replaced other conventional spellings in China’s English-language publications. The U.S. Government has also adopted the pinyin system for all names and places in China. For example, the capital of China is now spelled "Beijing " rather than "Peking."
In the pinyin system, letters are pronounced much as they would be in American English with the following exceptions.

**Complex initial sounds:**
- c – like the t’s in it’s
- q – like the ch in cheap
- x – like the sh in she
- z – like the ds in lids
- zh – like the j in just

**Final Sounds:**
- e – Pronounced like “uh”
- eng – like the ung in lung
- ai – as in aisle
- ui – pronounced way
- uai – like the wi in side
- i – like the i in skin
- ua – like the wa in waft
- ao – like the ow in now
- ian – pronounced yen
- ou – like the ow in dnow
- uan – pronounced when

*When zh, ch, sh, zh are followed by an “i,” the “i” is pronounced like an r in Beijing.

**BASIC CHINESE WORDS/PHRASES**

**GENERAL:**
- Hello - ni hao- 你好
- Goodbye - zài jiàn - 再见
- Please - qing - 请
- Thank you - xiè xiè - 谢谢
- You're welcome - bù kè qì - 不客气
Excuse me - dū bù qǐ - 对不起
Have - yǒu - 有
Do not have - méi yǒu - 没有
No problem - méi wèn tí - 没问题
It doesn't matter - méi gūn xi - 没关系
Want - yào - 要
Do not Want - bù yào / bù yòng - 不要/不用
Yes - shì - 是
No - bù shì - 不是
Correct/Yes - duì - 对
Incorrect/Wrong/No - bù duì - 不对
Chopsticks - kuài zi - 筷子
Toilet - cè suo - 厕所
Toilet paper - wèi shēn zi - 卫生纸
How are you? - Ni hǎo ma? - 你好吗
Have you eaten?(more commonly used as a greeting than "How are you?") - chī fàn le ma? - 吃饭了吗
Do you understand? - dǒng ma? - 懂吗
I don't understand - bù dǒng - 不懂

SHOPPING:
How much does it cost? - duō shào qián - 多少钱？
Too expensive! - tài guì le - 太贵了！
A little cheaper please - pián yì dián ba - 便宜点吧
DIRECTIONS:
Please take me to the:

Can you please help me find...?

Can you please help me get a taxi?

I am from the United States.

Excuse me, where is:

Please help me:

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

How?