
China Travel Tips

Please read carefully following tips before you travel to China. It is very important.

Travel Document

You must ensure that you bring the following items travel to China:

- A. Your valid passport
- B. Your Chinese tourist visa attached on your passport;
- C. Your e-ticket

Airport Check-In and Airline Seat Assignment

Both Air China and China Eastern Airline are located Terminal One, JFK International Airport. The airline requires all international passengers arrive at **JFK International Airport Terminal ONE** 3 hours before the departure. The airline check-in counter will open 4 hour before the departure.

If you take Air China, you could call Air China Service Center to book you seat after you receive you e-ticket. However, China Eastern Airline is still doing old fashion: assigning group passenger's airline seats when passengers check-in at airport. If you want sit next to someone, you have to check in at same time at airport. Also, if you have seat preference, you should arrive airport earlier to check-in.

Free Check in Luggage

You are going to take 2 international flights and 3 Chinese domestic flights. The free luggage allowance on all 5 international flights and Chinese domestic flights are **SAME** as following:

Flights	Free Checked Luggage	Max. Weigh Per Piece of Checked Luggage	Unchecked (Carry-On)
International Flights and Domestic Flights in China	2 pieces luggage per person and the dimensions of each luggage must NOT exceed 62 inches. The total dimensions of the 2 must NOT exceed 107 inches.	The maximum weight per checked bag is 50 lbs.	One carry-one luggage per person: 45 inches Max. Weight 11 lbs.

Airport rules for carry-on Luggage

No liquids or gels over 3 Oz. will be permitted in carry-on luggage. Such items must be in check-in luggage. This includes all beverages, shampoo, sun tan lotion, creams, tooth paste, hair gel, and other items of similar consistency.

When you go through security check point at airport in China you are not required to take off shoes. Beverages purchased in the boarding area, beyond the checkpoint,

must be consumed before boarding because they will not be permitted on board the aircraft.

Also, when you come back from Shanghai to JFK, there is second security check point before your board on airplane (Only for the flights to the US cities). You are not allowed bring any liquor board on airplane. Therefore, you should NOT purchase any liquor at Duty Free stop at airport after you go through the security.

Baggage Tag and others

Please identify your baggage by putting your name, address, phone and e-mail address on tag or label. It is easy to locate your baggage in case it is misplaced somewhere.

Cash, jewelry, antiques and other valuable items, must NOT be placed in checked baggage.

Weather in China

Most of Chinese cities have four seasons. Spring and fall season in China just like New York City. However, summer is a little bit hotter than New York City.

You can check daily weather and temperature in Chinese cities by visiting the following website: <http://weather.china.org.cn/english/>

Time Different

There are 12 hours different between China and New York (Eastern Standard Time). China is a big country, but only has one time zone. Since China is 12 hours ahead of New York, when you travel to China you will lost 12 hours. However, when you travel back from China, you will gain 12 hours..

Clothing and Shoes

There is no dress code when you travel in China. You should bring your casual, comfortable clothing when you are traveling to China. Also, a pair of comfortable sneakers is recommended for walking.

You are going to visit the Great Wall when you are in Beijing. The Great Wall is located in mountain area, and the temperature could be 5 -10 degree lower than the city, you should bring extra clothing to keep warm such as down jacket on that day.

All hotels we are going to stay have laundry services, but no laundry room to wash your clothing by yourself. Since laundry services are expensive, the suggestion is that you bring all necessary clothing and underwear; therefore, you can minimize using hotel laundry services.

Exchange Money

The Chinese currency is called RMB. Currently, the exchange rate for US Dollar to Chinese RMB is \$100: 610 (about \$1 to 6.10 RMB). You can exchange your money at hotel front desk or bank near your hotel. The exchange rate at hotel front desk or banks are almost same.

You don't need exchange your money here in US. Exchanging currency here is a little expensive than China. However, if you really want exchange your money in New York before your tour; you can get currency exchange at following bank or company:

1. Peoples Foreign Exchange, Corp
575 Fifth Avenue (at 47th Street Lobby 3)
New York, New York
Phone: 212-883-0550

2. Bank of China @ Chinatown Branch
42 East Broadway
New York 10002,
Phone: 212-925-2355

(Bank of China will charge \$10 transaction fee)

You can bring cash, traveler's check or credit card as well as debit card:

Credit card or debit card are easy to carry, and you can withdraw cash at **most** ATM machine in China. Some stores (not all stores) accept US credit card or debit card if you spend more than \$50. But, please be aware that your credit card company will charge you 2% to 3% service fee whatever you spent overseas. (**Capital One credit card** is only exception) You can bring your credit card or debit card as backup in case you out of cash.

Also, if you plan to use your credit card or debit card in China, you should call your credit card company before leaving the US, and let credit card/ debit card company know you are traveling to China. Otherwise, you might have problem to use your credit card or debit card overseas.

Traveler's Checks: Safe and easy to carry. Stores in China usually do NOT accept traveler's check. You can exchange traveler's check at bank and some hotel front desk for Chinese currency. However, it is NOT as easy as cash.

Cash: You can bring your US money to China. Most of time cash make your currency exchange easier and quicker.

Additional suggestions for your bringing your cash:

1. **No Damage.** Please check your money to make sure there is NO damage on your money since Chinese banks and stores do not accept damaged US money (even minor damage).
2. **Money Issued Year.** Please make sure the large bills \$50 and \$100, you take to China must be issued on 2004 or newer. They don't accept old large dollar bills.

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3. **A Lot of \$1 & \$5 Bill.** Please bring A LOT of \$1 and \$5, and some \$10 and \$20 bills to tip or buy small merchandise. \$1 bill is very useful in China. However, it is hard to find a place to break your large bill there in China.

Meals

China Eastern Airline will serve passenger 2 meals and 1 light snack on international flight. Also, China Eastern Airline usually serves one meal on domestic flight. If you are vegetarian, you should order vegetarian food in advance. (We will order vegetarian food for you if you put vegetarian on your tour registration from).

Breakfast: You will be served **breakfast** at hotel cafeteria wherever you stay. It is buffet style, half American breakfast and half Chinese breakfast. You can pick up whatever you like to eat.

Lunch and Dinner will be served at Chinese restaurants near sightseeing. Also, lunch and dinner will be served as Chinese family style: about 10 people sit a big round table, and waiter or waitress will serve you about 8 to 10 main courses. Occasionally, you are going to have buffet for your lunch or dinner. Chinese culture is family oriented which reflect on food eating. The KEY word is for the family style lunch and dinner is SHARING. You should take a small portion for each dish FIRST. Then, you can take more after dish cycle around and everyone has been served.

About more than 100% of Chinese vegetarian are Buddhists. They don't eat any meat including seafood, and they only eat vegetables, eggs and all kinds of tofu. Therefore, if you request vegetarian food, you are going to be served special meal with all kinds of vegetables, eggs and tofu, and you do not expect any kind of seafood.

Drinks

Don't drink tap water in China. You are suggested only drink boiled water or bottle water. It does not mean tap water in China is bad. It just means your stomach might not fit Chinese tap water. However, water served at restaurant is safe to drink. You can get one bottle of water per person per day from most of hotels in China. Also, you can buy bottle water on your charter bus driver: 2 or 3 bottle for \$1.00.

The rules of drinks at Chinese restaurants lunch and dinner:

Most of Chinese restaurant serve tea for free. Also Chinese restaurants usually serve ONE free cup of soda or ONE free glass of beer per customer. If you want more than ONE glass of soda or beer, you can purchase soft drinks or beer from restaurant waiter or waitress.

One liter beer or one liter soft drink cost about \$1.50 to \$2.00. Some restaurant let you choose bottle water for your first free drink, but some restaurants charge customer bottle water for about \$1.00 to \$1.50.

In China, most of restaurants serve regular soda only and it is very hard to find diet soda. Also, the restaurants in China only serve red wine or white wine by bottle NOT by glass.

Public Restrooms

Some public restrooms provide toilet paper, and some public restrooms do not provide toilet paper. Suggestion: take a roll of toilet paper from hotel bathroom everyday before you go out.

Toilets in China are generally more sophisticated than toilets in other developed nations. There are 100% modern Western-type flush toilets in the hotels you are going to stay. However, there are two styles of toilets commonly found in Chinese public restrooms: about 70% are modern Western-type flush toilets and 30% of the oldest type squat toilets. The squat toilet is a toilet used by squatting, rather than sitting.

Electrical plugs/voltage

In China, all electrical appliances use 220 voltages instead of 110. However, all hotels have at least one 110 voltage electrical outlet in each hotel room (usually located at hotel bathroom). You can recharge your electronic devices there in your hotel bathroom. Please double check the voltage before plug in.

Nowadays most of digital camera, camcorder and laptop computers can be recharged both 110v and 220v. All hotels provide hair dryer.

You can purchase adapter plug kit from Radio Shack, Home Depot or Target. Also, you can borrow adapter plug from hotel front desk.

International phone calls

It is expensive to make international phone call at hotel room. There are several alternatives to make call in China:

- a) Purchase IP card (Internet Phone Card) in Beijing or Shanghai to make international calls. It is about \$10 to \$15 dollars. However, most of phone card you can only use in one specific city (if you buy in Beijing, you can only make phone call in Beijing. Also, some hotels block this type of phone card calling out).
- b) Contact your cell phone service provider. Most cell phone companies offer international call with special rate.
- c) Take a cell phone (except Verizon phone) with you. The cell phone must have SIM card and the phone is de-coded. When you are in China, you could purchase Chinese cell phone SIM card (about \$15) to replace your US SIM card. You could find SIM card in most of convenient stores in Chinese cities. You could use your cell phone to make local call, receive phone call from US and call US cities.

How to make international calls

Dial from China to US: When you call US, you have to dial 001 first, and then dial area code and phone number (Example 001-212-456-7891).

Dial from US to China: if your family member and relatives want call you, dial 011-86- City Code first and then Chinese phone number (001 is making an international call, 86 is China country code). The example of city code as following: 10 is Beijing city code, 21 is Shanghai city code, 512 is Suzhou city code, and 29 is Xian city code).

Gratuities for Tour Guides & Drivers

Your gratuities for English tour guide and chartered bus drivers are **EXCLUSIVE** from your tour fees. **Each of travelers required to tip minimum of \$8/day for BOTH English speaking tour guide and bus driver to SHARE.**

Other tip related suggestions:

Bellman: \$1 per baggage for unload your luggage from chartered bus and bring to your hotel room or \$1 per luggage from your hotel room to load on chartered bus.

Hotel Maid: \$1 per guest/per night for the maid who clean your hotel room.

Restaurant Waiter and Waitress: NO TIP REQUIRED.

Taxi driver: NO TIP REQUIRED.

Hotel Check-in and Hotel Room Key

When you check-in hotel in China, you have to show your US passport. The hotel staff will make a photocopy of your passport first page and Chinese tourist visa page before give your room key. **Please make sure you get your passport back after you check in on same day.** A few hotels accept pre-copied passport (1st passport page and Chinese visa page). You could make several passport copies here in US. Therefore, you don't need give your passport when you check-in at hotel.

Hotel room key in China is a credit card size plastic card. **It functions as a key to open your hotel room door as well as a power connector. When you enter your hotel room, you should insert your hotel room key into a slot near door to get power in your room.** When you leave your hotel room, you should take your key out from the power connector slot. Your hotel room lights and TV will automatically shut off after 20 seconds. By this way, as a hotel guest you could help to save energy.

Also, some hotel elevators require your room key to operate. You have to insert your hotel room key into a slot, and then you are allowed pressing elevator button. With your hotel room key, you are allowed to go to certain floors in hotel.

Hotel Check-out Procedure

When you check-in hotel in China as a group, you don't require putting deposit. Therefore, when you check-out, the procedure is a little bit complicated because hotel want make everything clear before you leaving the hotel.

First, you have to go to the front desk returning your room card, and let front desk know that you want check-out.

Next, front desk call your hotel room maid to check your mini-bar and all other items in the room (such as towels, hanger, glasses) to make sure that nothing is missing or damaged.

Finally, you have to pay your drink if you take something from mini bar or pay your phone expense if you make any phone calls. Once everything is clear, your check-out is done. It will take about 5 to 15 minutes depend on how many people check-out at same time. You should give yourself enough time to check-out.

Also, please do not take any re-useable hotel items with you such as fabric laundry bag or displayed merchandise which is for sale. Hotel will charge you when you check out.

Hotel Room Phone

You can receive incoming phone call from your hotel room phone. However, if you want use hotel room phone to make long distance or **international call**, you must active your hotel room phone service at front desk first.

When using phone card to call US, you need access a local phone number. Some hotel provide free local phone call, some hotels charge low rate for local phone call. Depending on the hotels, some hotels you don't need activate your room phone to make local calls, but some hotel need customer to active room phone before making local call.

When you request active room phone, the front desk usually ask you to leave a deposit (about two hundred Chinese RMB), or you can leave your credit card as deposit. When you check out, you have to pay your telephone bill if you make phone calls in your room. You can either pay Chinese cash or pay your credit card for your hotel phone bill.

Bring a Small Calculator

It is suggested to bring a small calculator with you when you travel to China. Almost all merchandise prices in Chinese stores are labeled as Chinese RMB (although they accept US dollars). Currently, US dollar and Chinese RMB exchange rate is \$1: 6.10. It will be a big help if you have a small calculator to help you convert Chinese currency to US dollars (RMB price / 6.10 = actual US dollars price).

When you purchase a big item in China, you are allowed to use credit card (you pay Chinese currency, but your credit card company convert to US dollars). **Before you sign your credit card slip, please use your calculator to make sure the RMB amount is correct.** Because of language barrier, sometimes you might misunderstand the price you are paying. If you are not sure, please ask English speaking tour guide for help.

Hotel Internet and Wireless Services

All hotels you stay provide either Internet cable or WiFi services in your room. Some hotels Internet is free. However, some hotels charge fees for using hotel Internet either cable or Wi-Fi. The rate might be different: some hotel charge by day; some charge by hour or both. If you don't bring your laptop, you have to use computer at hotel Business Center to access Internet. Hotel will charge you by minute for using computer and Internet at Business Center.

Some hotels provide FREE WiFi at lobby area.

Medicines and Other Items

No shots or vaccine required before you travel to China.

You should bring your prescription medicines you take every day. Make sure you have enough to last during your trip. Keep them in their original prescription bottles and always in your carry-on luggage.

Also, the following items are suggested:

Medicine for fever in case you need, such as TYLENOL .

Medicine for diarrhea in case you need it in China, usually over-the-counter.

Antibacterial hand wipes or alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

Valuable document

Your US passport is your valuable travel document. **When you check-in hotel, make sure you get your passport back on same day.** You should put it at a safe place.

The only times you need your passport in China are: 1) Check in hotel, 2) check-in at airport; and 3) Exchange Chinese money.

Please do not leave cash money, wallet and other valuable items such as gold ring, ear rings, hearing aid in your hotel room when you go out.

In China, 4 or 5-star hotels always provide a small safe box in each hotel room and it is very easy to operate. You could put your passport and other valuable things in your

safe box when you go out during the day. **Also, you can give your valuable belongs to hotel front desk, and hotel manager will keep it in hotel safe box for you.**

Safety Issues:

Safety is our priority. Most of Chinese cities are pretty safe comparing to other cities in the world. But there are other safety issues I would like to address here.

1. Crossing the road:

Please be extra careful when crossing the roads in Chinese cities. You must use zebra crosswalk and wait for green pedestrian light. Sometimes cars, taxi, bike do not give priority to pedestrians even when the pedestrian traffic signal turns green. Therefore, you should cross street with tour guide and have to be careful of those cars that does not slow down even on green signal.

2. Getting off the tour bus.

Sometimes our tour bus parks at busy street near sightseeing. Before getting off bus, you must check passing by vehicles and make sure everything is Okay and then get off bus.

3. Do not eat food from street vendor

Do not buy and eat food from street vendors. The food from street vendor usually not clean and eating unclean food may cause diarrhea and other stomach problems.

4. Do Not follow Street sale agents:

You will saw dozen geeks who introduce you about those fake stuff--LV PRADA GUCCI or etc in shopping street—such as Nanjing Road or Old City of Shanghai. Please do not show you are interested in their stuff, otherwise you will have no chance to leave even you are not satisfied with what they provide! Those sale agents usually lead your way to a dark alleyway, or a small store, give you a hell expensive price.

5. Do not climb on statue

You are NOT allowed to climb on any statues at sightseeing for pictures. Also, it is dangerous to climb on statues.

6. Watch your steps:

The Western and Eastern architecture and landscaping are different. You have to be aware that there are always have some STEPS there indoor or outdoor, hotels, restaurants, parks, and sightseeing. Those 1 or 2 steps are usually NOT noticeable because it is NOT common here in the US. Therefore, **please be careful and watch out steps when you walking around in China.**

Also, most of Chinese have small feet (less than size 9), therefore; you will see size of stair steps in China usually a little bit narrower or smaller than the steps in the US. Please be careful when you walk on stairs.

Chinese people believe *Feng Shui*, most of Chinese traditional buildings and some contemporary buildings have door-sills. When you go through doors, please watch those door-sills carefully.

Street Vendors

In some sightseeing, you will see street vendors try to sell you something. Please don't buy it. There are several reasons:

- a) The merchandise quality is not guaranteed, once you bought, you can get returned and exchanged;
- b) Sometimes, you might get some counterfeit Chinese money back from street vendors. If you pay large Chinese bill, you might get back counterfeit money change;
- c) Waste your time (other group members have to wait for you)

Most of street vendors can speak English. The best way to get rid of these street vendors is speak some language other than English (such as Spanish, French or Russian).

Dinner and Show Arrangement

When you travel in China, you do not have time to go back to hotel taking shower, changing clothing before dinner or the traditional shows at night. You are straight going to restaurant for dinner or watch shows after sightseeing. There are several reasons for doing that.

- a) As you can see from your itinerary, you have busy scheduled activities almost every day. You properly have to leave the hotel 8:30 am and come back the hotel around 8:00 pm after having dinner. Since the bus driver has working code and it does not allow them to drive more than 12 hours a day.
- b) Traffic is pretty bad in most of Chinese major cities. It will take a lot time back and forth between hotel and restaurant.
- c) Finishing dinner earlier, you could get back to hotel earlier, Therefore, you can have your own time either to sleep, take a walk or go out for your night life.

We revise **China Travel Tip** every year. Please contact your travel agency for latest version of **China Travel Tip**.