

## CHINA TRAVEL INFORMATION

### China Visas

According to the Law of the People's Republic of China, foreign tourists must apply for visas at China's foreign affairs offices, consulates or other organizations authorized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. People coming to China from countries which have visa agreements with China (such as agreements which exempt tourist groups from visas) are treated in accordance with these agreements. A passport is required for visa application. The passport shall be valid for at least 6 months beyond the duration of the tour.

Visa is required for Canadians, Americans and people of most other nationalities who travel to China. You can apply it directly at the Chinese Embassies and Consulate Generals around the world.

It is not too much trouble to go to Hong Kong and apply for a new visa. You can get a new one in two or three days. (Even though Hong Kong is now officially part of China, going there still counts as leaving the country.) For Canadian and US passport holders, visa is not required for Hong Kong if your stay is less than 90 days as a tourist. For other passport holders, please consult with your nearest *PRC embassy or consulate*.

If you want to go to Tibet for a visit, you can apply for a visa only with the consent of the Tourism Administration of the Tibet Autonomous Region or any one of its foreign representative offices.

**China Tourist Visa** (also known as L visa) issued to travelers who enter China temporarily for tourism, sightseeing, visits with friends or relatives, medical treatment or other private purposes. China tourist visa is valid for 6 months with single-entry, or 6 months with double-entry, or 6 months/12 months with multiple-entry.

**China Business Visa** (also known as F visa) issued to foreigners who are invited to China for business visit, consult with business associates, attend professional or business convention, and make commercial contacts, or culture exchanges, short-term studies for a period of no more than six months. China business visa is valid for 6 months with single-entry, 6 months with double-entry, or 6 months/12 months with multiple-entry.

Please find more information about visa application in the file entitled "*Information about China Visas*".

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## **Customs**

Incoming passengers are allowed to bring with them, under temporary admission, one of each of the items listed below: Camera, portable tape-recorder, portable cinecamera, portable video-camera, and portable computer. Passengers carrying personal items over this limit should declare accurately to the Customs and fulfill all necessary customs formalities.

### ***Gold, Silver and Ornaments Made Thereof***

Passengers should declare to the Customs if the amount of gold, silver and other ornaments made thereof they are carrying exceeds 50 grams.

Any consignment for export of gold, silver and ornaments made thereof (including handicrafts of inlaid goldware and silverware) purchased in the territory shall only be allowed with special invoices issued by the People's Bank of China.

### ***Foreign Exchange***

On entering, no restrictions are imposed on the amount of foreign currency, travelers' checks, and credit cards. However, non-residents carrying more than 5,000 US dollars in cash should declare to the Customs. The Customs shall permit foreign exchange to be carried out based on the declarations or on relevant regulations issued by the National Administration of Exchange Control.

### ***Cultural Relics (including works by late modern famous painters and calligraphers)***

Cultural relics intended for export shall be sent in advance to the cultural administrative departments for verification. The Customs shall release them on the basis of authentic marks affixed on the works by the cultural administrative departments and invoices for permitting cultural relics out of the territory, or export license.

### ***Chinese Herbs and Chinese Patent Medicines***

The maximum limits per person on the value of Chinese herbs and Chinese patent medicines to be carried out to foreign countries shall be 300 RMB per person, and 150 RMB for traveling to Hong Kong or Macao.

The maximum limits on the value of medicine sent by post shall be 200 RMB abroad, and 100 RMB to Hong Kong and Macao.

Export of musk and any other Chinese herbs and medicines in excess of the prescribed limit mentioned above is prohibited.

### ***Prohibited Imports:***

1. Arms, imitation arms, ammunition and explosives of all kinds.
2. Counterfeit currency and counterfeit negotiable securities.

3. Printed matter, films, photos, gramophone records, cinematographic films, loaded recording tapes and video-tapes, compact discs (video & audio), storage media for computers and other articles which are detrimental to the political, economic, cultural and moral interests of China.
4. Deadly poisons of all kinds.
5. Opium, morphine, heroin, marihuana and other addiction inducing or hallucinatory drugs.
6. Animals, plants and products made thereof infected with or carrying diseases, insect pests and other harmful organisms.
7. Foodstuffs, medicines and other articles coming from epidemic-stricken areas and harmful to humans and livestock, or those capable of spreading diseases.

***Prohibited Exports:***

1. All articles enumerated as articles prohibited from import.
2. Manuscripts, printed matter, films, photos, gramophone records, cinematographic films, loaded recording tapes and video-tapes, compact discs (video & audio), storage media for computers and other articles which involve state secrets.
3. Valuable cultural relics and other relics prohibited from export.
4. Endangered and rare animals, plants (including their specimens) and their seeds or reproducing materials.

**Money**

The official currency in China is the Renminbi (RMB) or “people’s currency.” The basic unit is the Yuan (also known as “Kuai”), which equals 10 Jiao (or “Mao”), which is then divided into 10 fen.

Paper currency comes in 1,2,5,10,50 and 100 Yuan notes. Paper Jiao come in denominations of 1, 2, and 5. There are also 1 and 2 Fen notes, but they are rarely used as their purchasing power is exactly zero. As for coins, there are 1 Yuan, 1 and 5 Jiao, and 1, 2, and 5 Fen.

***Changing Money***

You can exchange traveler’s checks or cash at most banks, and hotels always have a money exchange counter. You can also get a cash advance on your American Express card, but for this you need to go to the Bank of China headquarters or Bank of China Beijing Branch or the one at your nearest branch of Bank of China.

To change money, you have to have your passport at hand. If you want to change money in a hotel, you usually have to be a guest there.

At present, RMB is not exchangeable on the international market, so it is only usable within the country. When you are changing money, don’t change too much, because it is difficult to change back into other currencies. To change RMB back into your home

currency, you must retain the exchange slips that are given to you at the bank or money exchange counter. Then when you want to go home, you have to bring the slips with you to prove that you are merely changing back money you haven't spent instead of taking out needed foreign exchange.

### ***Credit Cards***

Major credit cards such as Master Card, Visa, JCB and American Express can be used to purchase goods in large department stores. Credit cards cannot be used in small restaurants or small convenience stores—cash only.

They are mostly useful for paying for really expensive things. They can be used to pay for hotel rooms and for meals in some of the fancier restaurants. You can also buy plane tickets with them. As mentioned above, AmEx can be used to get a cash advance in the main offices of the Bank of China. It is also possible to cash a check against the AmEx card, but again, only in the main offices.

### **Spending** (\$1 ≈RMB 6.6 Yuan)

Your spending really depends on where you are going to eat and where you are going to shop. On average, a tourist spends no more than \$100 per day in China (excluding hotel, air transport and excessive shopping). Take Beijing for example (USD).

**Taxi:** the flag-down fare is \$1.5, \$ 0.3 per kilometer

#### **Food (per adult):**

- ♦ McDonald's and KFC: similar prices as in U.S.
- ♦ Average Chinese restaurants: \$6 - \$11 per meal.
- ♦ Beijing Duck: \$15
- ♦ Pizza Hut: \$15
- ♦ Brazilian BBQ: \$21.5

#### **Entrance Tickets:**

- ♦ Forbidden City: \$9
- ♦ The Temple of Heaven: \$6
- ♦ Lama Temple: \$4.5
- ♦ Beihai Park: \$3
- ♦ Summer Palace: \$9
- ♦ Great Wall: \$12.5

#### **Tours (per adult):**

- ♦ Half-day: \$55 - \$83
- ♦ One-day: \$85 - \$95
- ♦ Two-day: \$201
- ♦ Three-day: \$ 275
- ♦ Four-day: \$305

Please find more information about Beijing tours in the file entitled "*Beijing tours*".

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Prices at the airports and in hotels are ridiculously high. So don't buy anything there unless you really have to.

## **Telephone Calls**

### *International Calls*

International calls can be made directly from hotel rooms with IDD phones. Just dial the international prefix 00, plus country code, area code and number. Some large post offices also provide this service. Otherwise, look for roadside kiosks with the IDD sign. IDD calls have a three-minute minimum charge; additional time thereafter is calculated by the minute. Operator-assisted international calls have a minimum three-minute charge. Four-star and five-star hotels charge a variable service charge from 10 to 20 percent. For a collect international call, just dial the number listed in the section of Beijing Directory. The AT&T operator number in China is 10811.

### *Domestic Long-Distance Calls*

Direct long-distance calls (DDD) can be made from most hotels to some 2,000 localities throughout China. Visitors should dial the domestic prefix 0, plus area code and the number. Hotel service charges are the same as for international calls.

Most post offices also provide this service. Alternatively look for roadside kiosks with the IDD and DDD sign. If your call isn't urgent, phone between 21:00 and 07:00. Not only it is easier to get through but also calls are half the daytime price.

### *Phone Cards*

Magnetic phone cards and IC phone cards for IDD and DDD are available in major telecommunications offices and large hotels. China phone cards are specially issued to offer DDD and IDD services in any direct-dial phone around the city. Charges for calls within Beijing are 0.5 Yuan per three minutes, and there is no half price for long-distance calls.

Users may buy the cards at the Beijing Long-Distance Phone Service. Be careful, phone cards issued by Beijing Telecom can only be used in phones in Beijing. Phone cards issued by the Post Office or China Telecom can be used anywhere.

## **Business Hours**

Government Offices in Beijing generally open from 08:00-17:00, with a lunch break of about an hour. Company offices work days are also from Monday to Friday, usually starting at 9:00 till 18:00.

Most of the scenic spots in Beijing sell entrance tickets from 8:00 till 16:00. Some are open much earlier like Temple of Heaven, Beihai Park, and Summer Palace. Many early birds in Beijing come to these parks for morning exercises.

Shops generally open at 09:00 and close between 19:00 and 21:00 and are open on Sundays. Offices are usually closed on public holidays.

### **Electricity and China Electrical Outlets**

Most luxury hotels have built in converters in bathrooms for shavers, hair dryers, etc. Otherwise, come equipped, because an amazing variety of plug types are in use. The voltage is 220 volts.

China uses 220 volt power supply for standard domestic and business purposes. Hotels generally provide wall sockets in every bathroom for razors and hair dryers, accommodating both “straight two-pin plugs,” and “triangular 3-pins plugs.”

A variety of electrical outlets can be found in China, so a good all-around adaptor plug set is recommended. Keep in mind that no matter what type of plug an outlet might accept, voltage in China is 220V 50 Hz.

For more information about travels in Beijing, China,  
[http://www.tour-beijing.com/travel\\_tips/#1](http://www.tour-beijing.com/travel_tips/#1).

For more information about travels in Beijing,  
<http://www.chinatour.com/visa/visa.htm>.