

Whether you've been fascinated for years and it's your first trip or you want to practice Mandarin, China will satisfy your hunger. Pack this Inside Scoop menu of tips with your travel documents.

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

Useful Mandarin
pronunciation

Hello	nee-how
How are you?	nee-how-ma?
My name is...	woa-jow
Thank you	shia-shia-ni
Thanks	shia-shia
Goodbye	zai-jian
Doctor	ee-sheung
Yes	shi de
No	bu shi
OK	how-da

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- advance seats and upgrades
- cancellation/interruption and medical insurance, visas
- in-country flights and city-to-airport trains
- best spots to walk the Great Wall (not all of it...).

LeGrow's Travel

Inside Scoop: CHINA

Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey

China has become a hot destination—the easing of travel restrictions in the late 1970s and reforms means access to more sites with increasing tourism and business services. Some helpful tips:

- Have a valid passport that will not expire six months before the end of your trip. www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp
- Currency is the Yuan Renminbi. Banks exchange Canadian funds (have your passport) and travellers cheques. Credit cards are widely accepted. Us debit cards at ATMs; check with your bank as fees can add up at \$5 a withdrawal. Log the dates you'll be away with your credit card company and bank. In rural areas, use the Yuan.
- Depending where and when you visit, the weather ranges from humid subtropical with rain (southwest/east) with long summers; winters can be chilly and damp. Think layers.
- For cell phone use, check with your provider (beware of roaming charges!) regarding SIM cards. Internet access is widely available.
- Mandarin is the main language (Cantonese and Shanghainese in certain areas). While you'll see English in print and on signs, it's not widely spoken. Before going, learn common phrases; politeness and a smile often do wonders. Many websites help you practice pronunciation; use a cell phone app to help translate while you're there.
- Most hotels have 110V and 220V electrical outlets in the bathrooms, 220V in guest rooms. Bring an adaptor/convertor.
- Tipping was rare but is becoming common. As always, it's up to you, at your discretion.
- We strongly suggest LeGrow's Travel insurance such as cancellation/interruption and medical insurance. Insurance is an investment in peace of mind.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through any experience!

Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black bags so put coloured tape or ribbon on your luggage to spot it quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery; over-the-counter and prescription drugs in original containers with a list, dosage, doctor's phone number and documents on medical conditions.

Pack liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags). Carry-on restrictions mean the maximum size container is 100ml(3.4oz). All must fit in 1 clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre (often at airport security). You may take baby formula, food or milk for a child under 2 years of age (0-24 months). In carry-on pack pens/notebook, hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, meat or veg). Also permitted: laptops, cell phones, disposable razors, canes, umbrellas and nail clippers. Items you can't take on include sports gear. Check with your airline and www.catsa.gc.ca/home for restrictions.

Tips: don't drink tap water or water sold in the street. Take earplugs, deodorant and toilet paper (scarce in public restrooms).

Getting Around

In cities, public transit is your best bet given its vast networks; taxis are usually plentiful. Car rental is not easy and driving can be scary (in Shanghai, elevated expressways a challenge) as rush hour is rush day. Car rental companies usually need your documents days before you rent. Ask your counsellor about hiring private drivers. Extensive railway networks connect the country; know the stations you arrive at and leave from: **Shanghai** has 4 stations including the plain-out fun Beijing-Shanghai High-Speed Railway, max speed 300 kms/hr, taking half the time (almost 5hrs) of a regular train. Pay attention to bikes when walking! **Tip:** bicycle lanes are banned from many roads—unless you're expert or in a rural area, don't bike. If so, know other routes and always wear a helmet.

Tips: alcoholic beverages are expensive, get your favourite at an airport's duty free store. Canadian ice wine makes a terrific gift. Need help? Ask a young person; as English is increasingly taught, they welcome the practice (written questions might be easier.) A polarizing camera filter helps take out smog. Know that there are people all around...streets are usually packed.

Your Airline

Sign up online for your airline(s) email or text flight notifications as your flight could be delayed (the plane might be flying in). CATSA notes “*Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).*” Airline staff are on duty some 3hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in closes 1hr before departure. If late, you’re not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served. Many airlines have reciprocal “code-shares;” your ticket for one airline, you travel on another’s plane. **For check-in or carry-on baggage restrictions**, check your airline’s website or ask your counsellor. Size and weight restrictions for varies by airline. **Entry & Departure:** Have your passport available at all times; keep a separate photocopy of its ID page or photo on your cell phone. **Tip:** flights can be long. Use transfers to walk around. Airports often have cell charging units, healthy food, meditation rooms and nap pods (set alarms).



Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips

at www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops

- ☐ Your sense of adventure & humour!

Before Leaving For Home

Don’t buy or accept anything suspect or that may be taken from you at border services: no plants, narcotics, meat/animal products, certain Chinese agricultural products or endangered species parts. You are to know your limits and exemptions, www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html. With connections, unless in checked luggage, buy duty free alcohol before your last flight into Canada.



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadians: Emergency? The Canadian Embassy in Beijing and consulates (Hong Kong, Shanghai, Chongqing and Guangzhou) can help, www.canadainternational.gc.ca/china-chine/offices-bureaux/index.aspx. Or contact Global Affairs (collect if needed) 613-996-8885, sos@international.gc.ca

While There...

This is one big country, as well as the most populous, so it’s doubtful you’ll see everything that interests you. Pick what’s most important. The **Great Wall** is indeed a major attraction, some parts built 7th century BC. This key northern border was to protect the empire and—like today’s border controls—regulated people and trade (**Silk Road**).

The **Terracotta Army** sculpture collection replicates the first Emperor’s armies buried to protect him (including weapons) in his afterlife. A stunning display, the pits hold some 8,000 soldiers, musicians and, why not, acrobats—also 130 chariots with 670 horses, many still buried near **Emperor Qin Shi Huang’s mausoleum in Xian, Shaanxi**. Built ~210 BC, the site found in 1974.

Hong Kong is on the southern coast, one of the most densely populated areas in the world. It is a must-see. Culture and design? Food? On the “wow” scale? Check check and check. Originally a British colony, July 1, 1997 it became China’s first autonomous territory. **Old Town Central** has 5 themed walking routes aimed at helping visitors discover Hong Kong like a local.

Tip: fabrics are fantastic on **Queen’s Rd East** and Sham **Shui Po’s** market (Ki Lung St). Across the bay, **Ocean Park** is a marine mammal and amusement park. Martial arts aficionados flock to **Bruce Lee’s** statue. **Kowloon** peninsula is Hong Kong’s southern part, with great restaurants. **Tip:** Some children are exploited and beg, don’t respond and don’t give money.

Shopping & Souvenirs

Shops are everywhere—Shanghai’s famous 5.5km **Nanjing (Nanking) Road** is one of the world’s busiest streets. (**Jing’an Temple** metro hub). **Huaihai Road** is less touristy, upscale and favoured by locals (3 metro stations). Bargain in markets. Good options:

- Jade prices differ wildly; carvings and jewellery are everywhere;
- Cantonese enamel and pottery;
- spice mixes are welcome gifts and take little space in luggage as do scrolls, paper cutouts, silk scarves and fans;
- for a unique experience, some tea shops offer tastings. Tea is a great gift (and not heavy to take back in your luggage).

Top Cities

Beijing is the capital city, so many sight-seeing and travel options flow from there. Top spots include the **Forbidden City**, **Temple of Heaven**, **Ming Tombs** and **Chang’an Ave. Tiananmen Square** (30th anniversary 2019 of the pro-democracy event) is in the city’s centre.

Shanghai is at the mouth of the **Yangtze River** on the east coast, a major port throughout history, spurred by a 1990s resurgence. Must-see sites are **Yu Garden’s** six areas over 5 hectares, **museums** and **City God Temple** district with more than 100 stores. **Oriental Pearl Tower** is a landmark lit up at night with observation levels and cool 20-room **Space Hotel**. For history buffs, **Shanghai Museum** has an astonishing collection, as does the **Shanghai Art Museum**; see how traditional art developed into modern styles.

Chongqing (Chungking) is a major city and commercial centre in the southwest with historical and culture finds including **Baiheliang Underwater Museum**. The municipality covers a large area including mountains; the Yangtze crosses west to east. **Dazu Rock Carvings** are religious sculptures—some 50,000—and carvings date from 7th century AD. **Chongqing Zoo** hosts rare species including the popular pandas (and tigers and elephants, oh my!)

At the southeast, **Guangzhou** (Canton/Kwangchow) is also a commercial centre, a major trading port and site of technology’s **Science City**. The **Temple of the Six Banyan Trees** pagoda was built in 537.

Fabulous Food

You will not go hungry, **Dim Sum** a great option, where servers with carts wander or whizz by calling out offerings such as *har gow*, (shrimp in rice paper) and *cha(r) siu bao* (barbequed pork inside a steamed bun.). If something looks good, just point to it and nod. **Tip:** start off with one plate or steamer basket as there’s so much to choose from (although you might adore braised chicken feet...just saying). **Hotpot** restaurants have a central vat or pot on tables where food is boiled in a spicy broth; you pick what you want and cook it. If alone, noodles or rice as a base makes a great one-dish meal.

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don’t let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue’s local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at 1-888-551-1181. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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