



China

### RISK SUMMARY

Political	Operational	Security	Terrorism	Travel	
					China
					Non-central districts of cities in Guangdong province; remote border areas
					Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR)

We advise there are no significant restrictions on travel to China, but security measures are necessary. [Click here for travel security advice.](#)

Evacuation planning phase: **PREPARATORY**

### POLITICAL RISK SUMMARY

**CONTROL RISKS:** The transition to a market economy is placing enormous strain on Chinese society and the political system. The current leadership must maintain a rapid rate of economic growth and curb official corruption if it is to shore up its slowly eroding legitimacy, and has placed increased emphasis on a more balanced growth model, rejuvenating rural areas and the industrial 'rustbelt' of the north-east. However, given the scale and cost of these tasks and the shortcomings of the Chinese party-state as an administrative machine, it is not yet clear whether regime-threatening social and political unrest can be avoided in the long term – though it is not a short-term threat.

President Xi Jinping assumed office along with Premier Li Keqiang at the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC)'s 18th National Congress in October 2012. While the leadership transition was believed to entail frictions – reflected in the dismissal of Bo Xilai in early 2012 – President Xi has successfully consolidated his power within the party as well as the military. Political stability is expected to continue in the coming years.

#### *Hong Kong*

The central government in Beijing is sensitive to the crucial importance of Hong Kong to the Chinese economy and realises that this would be jeopardised if the territory's freedoms and strong legal environment were eroded. At the same time, Beijing is unlikely to allow Hong Kong complete political independence in choosing its leaders when it fears this concession could bolster demands for separatism or autonomy in provinces like Tibet and Xinjiang. Beijing attempts to maintain a largely 'hands-off' approach, and fears of a major clampdown and authoritarianism after the end of British rule in 1997 have not been realised.

Tensions arise intermittently over the degree of Beijing's control over Hong Kong, seen most recently in the 2014 student-driven protests for completely independent universal suffrage. Large protests took place as well in 2003-04 when then-chief executive Tung Chee-hwa's administration tried to enact controversial security laws that could have been used to curb personal freedoms.

Interference by Beijing remains strictly limited to 'red-line' areas on politically sensitive issues; the traditionally strong operating and investment environment for business is not under threat in the short term. That does not preclude perceptions among many in Hong Kong that its autonomy is under threat, evident in anti-China expressions in the run-up to March 2012 elections. The contradiction between Beijing's desire to retain political control and popular democratic aspirations will lead to further periodic surges in political tension.

### OPERATIONAL RISK SUMMARY

**CONTROL RISKS:** Foreign companies operating in China continue to face a lack of transparency, inconsistently enforced laws and regulations, weak protection of intellectual property, corruption and an unreliable legal system. However, the situation is improving. Infrastructure is rapidly improving, though bottlenecks, particularly in electricity generation, have emerged as development has failed to keep up with economic growth. Many foreign companies report shortages of qualified staff such as accountants. Companies should also be aware of reputational risks, both in and outside China, such as the boycotts faced by French companies in 2008 stemming from Olympics-related controversies. Fatal cases of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird (avian) flu have occurred among humans, but this presents no immediate threat to personnel unless they come into direct contact with infected birds. Isolated cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) could return in future. Arbitrary quarantines of personnel can occur, as demonstrated in 2009 with some cases of influenza A/H1N1 (swine flu).

### SECURITY RISK SUMMARY

**CONTROL RISKS:** Local communities welcome foreign business operations as a source of jobs and wealth, and they typically face few security threats. However, foreign-invested companies are not immune from security problems. Restructuring, making redundancies or relocating to a different part of the country can elicit hostility from local governments and employees, and must be planned carefully. Some have experienced minor bomb attacks, extortion attempts and violent acts targeting managers. Foreign personnel face few risks to their security, though companies' senior Chinese (or ethnic-Chinese) executives face a heightened risk of kidnap-for-ransom and violent robbery, particularly in Guangdong province's Guangzhou-Dongguan-Shenzhen corridor. Risks of theft of intellectual property or leaking of sensitive commercial information necessitate rigorous IT security measures and due diligence by senior personnel.

China has seen a trend of growing intent and capacity of Uighur militants to target the general population at high-profile public places (such as train stations and central public squares). Although the majority of incidents have happened in south-west Xinjiang, attacks have taken place outside the province in Beijing and Kunming (capital of Yunnan province). Foreign businesses and personnel are rarely targeted unless directly involved or located near such incidents. (See terrorism risk summary for more detail.)

Small, crude bombings are a common occurrence around the country, but are mostly criminal rather than terrorist in nature and pose only a very low, incidental risk to personnel. Riots in Tibet in 2008 and Xinjiang in 2009 were among the largest protests against Chinese rule in two decades. These riots and other forms of unrest are usually put down quickly by the authorities.

#### *Hong Kong*

Foreign investors face few risks to their personnel and assets, though expatriates' properties have been targeted in burglaries. Kidnapping and extortion by common criminals and organised crime gangs (triads) are almost exclusively confined to the ethnic-Chinese business community. Companies should prioritise information security. Local hackers are highly sophisticated and IT crime is rising. Setting up fake websites and sending misleading emails are increasingly popular ways of committing fraud.

### **TERRORISM RISK SUMMARY**

**CONTROL RISKS:** No major international terrorist organisations operate in China and the country is not a major focus for extremist Islamist groups. Rather, the main terrorist threat in China comes from domestic Uighur militant separatists. The majority of Uighur attacks – primarily concentrated in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region's southern and south-western prefectures – have remained low-level, crude and small in scale, and targeted symbols of the state or Chinese security forces.

However, recently China has seen a trend of growing intent and capacity of Uighur militants to target the general population at high-profile public places (such as train stations and central public squares or markets). This includes two officially confirmed cases outside of Xinjiang province, one in Beijing in 2013 and one in Kunming (capital of Yunnan province) in 2014. Foreign businesses and personnel have not been targeted unless directly involved or located near such incidents.

There have also been increasing reports since early 2015 of Uighurs leaving via China's southern or south-western borders. The government has said that some are attempting to join jihadist movements outside China, while human rights groups claim many are seeking political asylum in South-East Asia. As well as increasing security surveillance in border areas, China has stepped up anti-terrorism and security dialogue with countries including Pakistan, Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand.

Beijing's repression-focused policies in Xinjiang exacerbate ethnic frictions that often escalate into violent clashes, but its strong security presence and intelligence-gathering capacity and tight surveillance also help prevent significant growth in those groups' capabilities. Despite recent incidents outside Xinjiang, there is little evidence that these attacks indicate a rise in terrorism risks in China overall, or suggest Chinese prefectural-level cities along the east coast are more dangerous. Terrorism does not present a major threat to foreign companies in China.

#### *Hong Kong*

Hong Kong has no domestic terrorist organisations. To date there is no record of terrorist attacks in the city. The security forces and immigration services are well organised, well funded and efficient, though the geography of the region would make it possible for foreign militants to enter Hong Kong. The domestic Muslim community is small and moderate. As in other major international and financial hubs, there is a small risk that international Islamist extremists could attack Western government or commercial targets.

### **TRAVEL RISK SUMMARY**

Foreign business travellers face few major security issues when travelling in the country. Petty crime, particularly in crowded areas such as markets and train stations, and confidence tricksters, ranging from basic tourist scams to more elaborate commercial fraud, are the main risks to travellers. Violent crime against foreigners is rare, but not unheard of. Ethnic-Chinese visitors, regardless of nationality, face a heightened risk of falling victim to crime.

China's complex business environment can have security implications in some circumstances, for example, when restructuring, downsizing or starting operations. Foreign-invested companies and foreign travellers engaged in business with them are not immune to falling victim to China's complex corporate business regulations.

Other travel risks include natural disasters. China is the most natural disaster-prone country in the world, mainly through earthquakes and floods. Driving standards in the main cities are generally adequate, but deteriorate significantly as one moves away from Tier 1 cities and into more rural areas.

#### *Hong Kong*

Travellers must take precautions against petty crime and scams in the main business, shopping and entertainment districts of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. Public protests have become a common feature of political life, blocking streets and disrupting traffic, but most have passed off peacefully.

The information above is intended as a summary of the travel security environment; however, the risks can change at short notice during a crisis or evolving situation. Please check our travel security alerts to ensure you are informed of the most recent developments.

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## **TRAVEL SECURITY GUIDE**

### **STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE**

#### **STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE**

- Normal travel can continue.
- Be aware that special permits are required for entry into and travel within the Tibet Autonomous Region. Personnel should also be aware that the authorities may on occasion restrict travel to or within regions of China with little or no notice during periods of heightened political tension. Contact your embassy prior to travel for up-to-date information on travel permit requirements.
- Ensure that official documentation is in order at all times and comply with all registration requirements.
- Carry identification at all times to expedite passage through security checkpoints. Copies of residence permits and the identification and visa page of

passports should be accepted in most cases. Consider carrying a card stating your particulars in Chinese (in characters, not romanised form).

- Take basic security precautions against the risk of petty and street crime.
- Avoid demonstrations, protests and rallies to mitigate the risk of becoming involved in incidental violence or clashes with the security forces. In the event of unrest, where possible to do so safely, return to your accommodation and remain there until the situation stabilises.
- Avoid sensitive topics of discussion, including Tibet, Taiwan, Tiananmen, the Falun Gong movement, the Communist Party, Human Rights, minority rights, democratisation and religious freedom.
- Be aware that items considered to be detrimental to China's political and social stability, in particular any material linked or perceived to be linked to the aforementioned topics, could be confiscated by officials. These may include undeveloped films, recorded material, publications and computers. Personnel should also be aware that carrying politically sensitive material or engaging in political activism, or being perceived as such, may result in temporary detainment and deportation.
- Be aware that anti-foreigner sentiment is possible during periods of heightened national sentiment, for example, during diplomatic and other international disputes.
- The risk of terrorist attacks in major cities is credible but low; Uighur militants occasionally carry out attacks within Xinjiang province. Be aware that small-scale bombings related to business or personnel disputes are not unusual, though these are very unlikely to directly target foreigners. Report any suspicious behaviour and packages to the authorities.
- Do not self-drive unless very familiar with local conditions; driving standards are poor outside the main cities and traffic is hectic within them.
- Be aware that buses and other forms of public transport can attract pickpockets; maintain vigilance over your personal possessions.
- Be aware of the performance record of Chinese domestic airlines and consult travel agents regarding their suitability while making travel plans.
- Be aware that information security and leaks of sensitive commercial data are issues in China; exercise stringent information security protocols.
- Be aware of the lack of clarity of China's state secrets law. The law is very vague and broadly defines what are considered state secrets. Business travellers should exercise caution before potentially sending abroad documents or information that would fall under the coverage of this law.

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## TRAVEL SECURITY

### CRIME

China is generally safe, though petty crime, especially pickpocketing, bag-snatching and theft of valuables such as laptops and mobile telephones, occurs with some regularity and is the main concern for foreign travellers. Such crimes mostly occur on public transport (in particular on buses and in train stations) and in crowded places such as markets, tourist and entertainment or shopping areas in major cities throughout the country, including the capital Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou (Guangdong province) and Shenzhen (Guangdong). The huge income disparity in the cities, compounded by the influx of migrant workers is the primary driver for these activities.

Confidence tricksters are also a concern for travellers. Criminals use various scams to make money from victims; this is a particular concern in the main tourist areas of all cities. There are numerous reports of foreigners having been approached by strangers and offered a drink in a bar or a tea house, and then being presented with an inflated bill. Additionally, there have been reports of strangers spiking tourists' food and drink prior to robbing them. Another very common scam is from unlicensed 'black taxis' overcharging their customers at night or at airports. More elaborate commercial scams are also widespread. In particular, cybercrime, financial and phone scams, and credit card fraud are an increasing concern.

The crime rate is generally higher in the main cities where economic development and growing wealth has attracted a large number of migrants from the countryside, some of whom make a living through theft and deception. The knock-on effect of the recent economic slowdown and unemployment problems are also fuelling this growing crime trend.

Violent crimes targeting foreigners are less common but do occur. There are numerous reports of foreigners in major cities having been approached by strangers and offered massage services in a 'nearby' location, and then being robbed. Ethnic-Chinese are more likely to become targets of violent crime, particularly if they have been involved in business disputes with Chinese partners, than people of other ethnic backgrounds. Criminals are increasingly targeting high-income local individuals, making senior executives in foreign-invested enterprises a prime target for robbery, car crime and even kidnap. Foreigners should not risk attracting criminals with overt displays of wealth.

Security conditions in southern China, particularly Guangdong, are generally worse than elsewhere. Smuggling activities are known to take place in border areas, especially along those with Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar (Burma). In Yunnan province, drug smuggling and related crimes have increased. However, business travel to nearly all parts of China remains relatively safe provided that personnel take reasonable precautions.

### KIDNAPPING

Kidnapping does occur in China, though the overwhelming majority of victims are locals or overseas Chinese visiting from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Kidnap-for-ransom seldom involves violence when a ransom is paid, but several violent incidents have occurred. Short-term detentions of foreign business personnel have also been reported in the context of commercial or labour disputes.

Kidnapping is also used to resolve business disputes between Chinese (often linked to criminal gangs) if the 'wronged' party is hesitant to involve the PSB (police). In these cases, kidnapers usually demand the outstanding debt is paid as the ransom. Southern China, particularly the Guangzhou-Dongguan-Shenzhen corridor in Guangdong province, is the worst-affected region for this kind of crime. Foreign business owners have been detained at their place of work for similar reasons in Beijing and Shanghai in recent years.

### SOCIAL UNREST

While demonstrations are illegal in China, they occur frequently; conservative figures estimate 25 protests in China between 2006 and 2013, while other studies put the figure at approximately 180,000 protests in 2010 alone. The disparity in numbers indicates the government has to a large extent been successful in containing unrest and preventing protests from turning into co-ordinated, cross-sectoral and regional campaigns, by detaining ring leaders and offering some concessions to protesters. However, the majority of daily demonstrations do not receive media attention.

Protests mainly relate to land disputes, forced relocations, environmental and labour issues (unpaid salaries and poor working conditions) and local officials' alleged corruption or abuse of power. Strikes and protests triggered by labour disputes occasionally turn violent, with workers taking senior managers hostage or

damaging company property. Workers often engage in threat or intimidation of managers; however, targeted acts of violence at workplaces are rare. In the past, demonstrations were usually confined to the vicinity of the company, government office or industrial zone in question, though protesters have shown a propensity to congregate in main squares and to block major roads to draw attention to their cause, resulting in considerable disruption.

Disgruntled individuals have carried out attacks over personal issues or business disputes; such incidents usually involve crude explosives and are small in scale. However, such attacks are highly unlikely to target foreign business travellers or expatriates, focussing instead on local government buildings or workplaces.

Industrial projects that are perceived as having a possible negative impact on the health and welfare of local people have the potential to trigger localised demonstrations. Such protests have increased in frequency in several cities, including Dalian (Liaoning province), Guangzhou, Jieyang, Shantou (all Guangdong province), Haimen (Jiangsu province), Jiaxing (Zhejiang province), Pingxiang (Jiangxi province), Shifang (Sichuan province) and Shanghai.

However, protests are usually short-lived and swiftly contained by the police. While such disturbances very rarely threaten foreigners, personnel should avoid protests, which can be dealt with by the police in a forceful manner.

Pro-Tibetan independence riots erupted in March 2008 in the Tibet Autonomous Region, as well as Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces. Ethnic-Han Chinese businesses in the Tibetan capital Lhasa were attacked during the disturbances, which were forcefully contained by the government. Tibet was temporarily closed to foreigners on that occasion, and is periodically closed during times of heightened tension or around sensitive dates, such as the anniversary of the Tibetan uprising on 10 March.

There have been occasional tensions between the ethnic-Han majority and ethnic minorities such as Uighurs or Mongolians, which can result in sporadic incidents of violence. In some of the most serious unrest, at least 150 people were killed and more than 1,000 others injured in riots in July 2009, following clashes between Han Chinese and Uighurs in Urumqi, the capital of the north-western Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR). The alleged abuse of a Han Chinese woman by Uighurs in Shaoguan (Guangdong), which triggered violent demonstrations on the following day during which two Uighurs were killed and 120 others injured, may have been a trigger for the unrest. Several incidents of violence and the worst since riots in 2009 occurred in Xinjiang in June 2013, particularly affecting Hotan and Turpan prefectures. Such incidents of violence can prompt prolonged security lockdowns in Xinjiang province. Additionally, the security environment is likely to remain sensitive around dates such as anniversary of the July 2009 riots. The security presence is also increased in Xinjiang during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, when tensions between the Uighur population and the authorities rise. While the ethnic tensions reflect the growing income disparity between the wealthier Han and poorer ethnic minorities, they do not pose a threat to China's overall security.

Bilateral tensions between China and Japan occasionally result in protests. A series of well-attended and disruptive nationalist demonstrations took place in cities across China throughout August and September of 2012 over the disputed islands in the East China Sea (known as Diaoyu in China and Senkaku in Japan). There were acts of vandalism and arson targeting Japanese-branded factories, businesses, shops and vehicles in some locations, while personnel of Japanese appearance or descent were targets for harassment and abuse in some instances. Sensitivities around the 13 December 1937 capture of Nanjing (Jiangsu) remain strong; the anniversary remains a potential flashpoint for small protests. Japanese personnel should be alert to information regarding possible protests and maintain a low profile.

Rallies usually over political and socio-economic issues take place occasionally in Hong Kong, and typically focus on the Central Government Offices. While generally peaceful, gatherings have the potential to cause considerable traffic disruption in their vicinities.

## **TERRORISM**

Explosive materials are relatively easily available and a range of groups or individuals have the capability to carry out low-level, unsophisticated attacks with homemade devices. Small-scale acts of terrorism occasionally take place linked to business or personal disputes. Relevance to agenda has been the primary driver in choice of location for these types of incidents, which have occurred in places such as public buses, banks, government offices and shopping malls.

The prospect for a sophisticated, mass-casualty attack remains very low, not least because of the strong mitigating abilities of the authorities. The country's domestic terrorism is most salient in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in the country's north-west. The region's remote south-western prefectures, such as Aksu (Akesu), Hotan (Hetian) and Kashgar (Kashi), where the population is predominantly Uighur and resentment against the authorities are more pronounced, are the most prone to extremist violence, though no area of XUAR – including the regional capital Urumqi – should be considered immune; a series of bombings, one of which was a suicide attack, have taken place in Urumqi.

There is some evidence of links between militant elements within the Turkic-speaking, Muslim Uighur population, who are opposed to ethnic-Han rule, and Islamist extremist groups outside the country. However, individuals with little training or experience, who operate outside the formal structure of a group and have a variety of motivations, are the principal perpetrators of low-level violence and attacks in Xinjiang.

There have been claims of disrupted terrorist attacks outside the far north-west; most notably, the authorities in 2008 arrested several Uighurs in Xinjiang in connection with an alleged plot to carry out attacks at the Olympic Games in Beijing. The authorities have also linked an October 2013 car incident in Beijing and several knife attacks in Kunming railway station (Yunnan province) and Guangzhou (Guangdong province) with Xinjiang-based Uighur militancy. These incidents are indicative of an increased risk of Uighur militant attack outside Xinjiang. However, Uighur grievances are not linked to anti-foreign sentiment, and foreign businesses and personnel are unlikely to be directly targeted.

## **CONFLICT**

China is involved in a territorial dispute with six other countries, including Vietnam, India, Philippines and Malaysia, over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, which are thought to sit above substantial oil fields. China is also party to the dispute over the Diaoyu Islands (known as Senkaku in Japanese) in the East China Sea, which are also claimed by Taiwan and Japan. A series of sometimes violent protests took place in August and September 2012 to denounce Japan's assertion of sovereignty over the islands. Regional tensions were heightened in November 2013 over the establishment of Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea by the Chinese authorities. The Chinese ADIZ includes the airspace over a set of disputed islets and partly covers Japan's ADIZ as well as those of South Korea and Taiwan.

Memories of the Japanese invasion and occupation of China from 1937 to 1945 and the occupiers' treatment of the Chinese still sour bilateral relations; anti-Japanese protests broke out in 2005 following the publication of a Japanese textbook that China claimed contained incorrect information on Japan's Second World War record. Similarly, visits by Japanese leaders to the Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo (Japan) can lead to an increase in tensions; the shrine honours Japan's war dead, including a number of convicted war criminals.

Relations between China and Taiwan have been tense since the end of China's civil war and the establishment of a rival regime in Taiwan in 1949. China views

Taiwan as a breakaway province that should be reunited with the mainland. Despite the thawing of relations between the two following the election in March 2008 of President Ma Ying-jeou and his Kuomintang (KMT), there seems no prospect of a permanent settlement on Taiwan's status for many years to come and it will thus remain a potential, though unlikely, flashpoint. The next presidential election in Taiwan is to be held in 2016. Depending on the result, heightened tensions are possible between the two countries.

Relations with India have improved following a brief war in 1962, though bilateral talks have not been effective on the status of the contentious Line of Actual Control (LAC), which is the effective border with India. Tensions between the two countries were heightened in April 2013 following the alleged intrusion by the Chinese troops across the LAC into the Ladakh region (India). However, the dispute does not pose any significant risk of conflict.

## **POLITICAL SITUATION**

China is a communist state and has been ruled since 1949 by the Communist Party of China (CPC), the world's largest political party, with more than 70m members. The CPC, though ostensibly one of several political parties, has a tight hold on power and controls every state body, with which party organisations are closely intertwined. China's size necessitates the decentralisation of power to provinces and municipalities where strong party organisations also exist.

The CPC's Central Committee in November 2012 elected a new Politburo, which elected the new Politburo Standing Committee (PSC, the country's most powerful decision-making body), headed by Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang. Xi, who is the general-secretary of the CPC and the chairman of the central military commission, was appointed as China's new president in March 2013; Li Yuanchao, a close ally of the former president Hu Jintao, was elected as the new vice-president.

A major economic reform programme initiated in the 1970s has produced dynamic, impressive GDP growth, but exacerbated social tensions, which serve to deter the CPC leadership from all but very gradual political liberalisation.

Criticism of the CPC, its leaders and the system of government is not tolerated.

### *Hong Kong*

Hong Kong enjoys autonomy in economic and trade affairs, though its sovereignty falls under the People's Republic of China. Hong Kong's parliament is known as the Legislative Council, comprised of 70 seats. CY Leung in March 2012 was elected as the Chief Executive of Hong Kong.

## **RULE OF LAW**

Political stability and social control in China are predicated on the supremacy of the Communist Party of China and the overarching presence of the communist system rather than the pre-eminence of the rule of law, respect for state institutions and an independent judiciary. Recognition of the need for a stronger framework to support an increasingly sophisticated corporate environment has resulted in the strengthening of the judicial system, but this remains subject to the vagaries of political and commercial influence.

The concepts of human rights and freedom of expression are counterbalanced by a strong traditional emphasis on duty to the nation. China has a vast military establishment and grassroots party organisation that monitor and enforce adherence to government policy and preclude often frequent social unrest from escalating to destabilising proportions. Foreigners, particularly human rights activists and journalists, who aggressively broach the sensitive topics of political pluralism, Tibet, Taiwan and human rights issues, can be expelled from the country.

The police deal effectively with most routine problems and generally treat foreigners courteously. For more serious problems, travellers should also alert their embassy and inform the police that they have done so. Most diplomatic missions have security liaison officers who can ensure that cases are followed up properly.

The police in China generally do not carry firearms. However, from April 2014 the authorities began arming the police in major urban centres for routine patrols. The arming is in response to an incident in March 2014 in Kunming (Yunnan province), when around ten assailants killed at least 29 civilians and injured more than 140 others with knives and machetes at the main railway station.

## **CORRUPTION**

Expatriates, particularly those working for multinational corporations, rarely encounter forthright demands for bribes.

## **NATURAL DISASTERS**

China is prone to natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods and typhoons. In May 2008, a magnitude 7.9 earthquake struck Sichuan province, killing more than 63,000 people and displacing millions. More than 2,000 aftershocks were recorded in less than a month following the initial tremor, which caused significant damage to the region's infrastructure.

Annual flooding is common in central, west and south China, particularly in the Yangtze river basin. During the monsoon season from April to October, flooding and rainstorms can disrupt the provision of basic services in affected areas. The typhoon season, which typically lasts between May and December, affects areas along the southern and eastern coasts. China is the country most frequently affected by typhoons in the world – it has an average of seven typhoons a year.

Mudslides and landslides caused by heavy rains are also common in mountainous areas. The Khunjerab pass (on the border with Pakistan-administered Kashmir) of the Karakoram Highway connecting China to Pakistan can be hazardous due to unpredictable rock slides, which can cause sizeable boulders to fall on narrow roads at any time. Avalanches also are possible during winter.

Urban centres in China are not immune from significant flooding due to episodes of heavy rains. Extremely rapid urbanization, associated with economic development has made it difficult for city planners to provide adequate water drainage infrastructure. As a consequence, the vast majority of Chinese cities have experienced flooding episodes. Although short lived in nature, they are nonetheless capable of causing safety issues and periodically significant travel disruptions in city centres.

The capital Beijing is particularly prone to disruption caused by heavy flooding; the rainy season usually lasts from June to September, which accounts for 70% of the annual rainfall. In July 2012, a flash flood hit the city, killing at least 79 people and causing widespread travel disruption. At Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK), the floods resulted in the cancellation of over 500 flights, stranding 80,000 travellers. Beijing is also vulnerable to earthquakes, as it is situated in a risk area for earthquakes.

## BUSINESSWOMEN

There are no specific risks for female travellers or businesswomen. However, all women are advised to follow commonsense security precautions such as:

- Dress modestly to avoid drawing unwanted attention. Observe and respect local clothing customs.
- Say no politely to invitations that would take you beyond your personal comfort levels, even if faced by amicable pressure to behave otherwise.
- Plan your itineraries bearing in mind risks incurred by women in various modes of transport available in your location; prioritise security in your choice of transport. Do not travel on public transport after dark without a known male companion.
- Be prepared to ask trusted contacts to accompany you to your car, a taxi or your hotel after dark.

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## RISK ZONES

### RISK ZONES

#### Non-central districts of cities in Guangdong province: MEDIUM

The non-central districts of cities in southern Guangdong province suffer from elevated levels of petty and street crime, posing a higher risk to business personnel. Many parts of these areas are predominantly populated by migrants from across the country who have relocated in search of employment opportunities at the multitude of manufacturing plants. The resultant diversity, prevalence of job insecurity and lack of economic 'safety nets' for many migrants has created socio-economic tensions that fuel crime and sometimes unrest; this influx has brought with it a number of vice crimes, including prostitution, gambling and narcotics use, all of which contribute to overall criminal activity and security risks for personnel.

#### Remote border areas: MEDIUM

Areas bordering Indo-China (south-west), the Russian Far East (north-east) and Central Asia (north-west) are prone to cross-border smuggling and associated crime, such as banditry. They are less well policed than other parts of the country and business personnel face an increased risk of exposure to violence.

#### Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR): MEDIUM

Separatist insurgency in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) results in occasional uprisings, bomb attacks and assassinations. There is an increased risk of exposure to incidental violence to business visitors and expatriates.

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## COUNTRY TRAVEL GUIDE

## ARRIVAL

### METHOD OF ARRIVAL

#### By air

The main international airports are in the capital Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou (Guangdong province). Shanghai has two international airports – Pudong Airport ([PVG](#)) and Hongqiao Airport (SHA). In addition to Beijing Capital Airport ([PEK](#)), construction is under way on a second airport to serve Beijing in Daxing district, and is expected to be completed by 2017. Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport ([CAN](#)) is the hub for China Southern Airlines and is the second-busiest airport in the country. The airport is also referred to as New Baiyun to distinguish it from its predecessor. The new Kunming Changshui International Airport (KMG), located in Kunming (Yunnan province), began operations in June 2012.

Bomb threats against flights have occurred periodically. While these threats have largely been hoaxes that are criminal in nature or stem from local disputes or personal grievances, there are indications of a intent and capacity of extremist militant cells or disgruntled individuals to target public venues. Tight security should be expected at the airports in Baiyun, Beijing, Hongqiao, Pudong and Urumqi airports. Travellers can expect protracted check-in times due to stringent pre-departure screening, including luggage inspection and removal of shoes. Passengers should arrive at least two hours prior to their scheduled departure.

Thieves have been known to pose as airlines representatives at Beijing Airport. They may approach travellers and ask for their bags, then demand money for their return. Travellers should be cautious when dealing with airline employees and thoroughly verify their identity. They should try to remain in public space and consider flagging down another passing airport officer or request to personally speak to the officer's supervisor before following any instructions.

Flights tend to experience considerable disruption due to dense fog and snow in the winter months (November to March); flight disruption is also possible due to thunderstorms between April and June. In addition, significant flight delays can occur due to poor air traffic management. Flights can also be overbooked during national holiday periods, including the Spring Festival and the Chinese New Year (late January-early February), International Labour Day (first week of May) and National Day (first week of October). Passengers should make reservations well in advance for travel during holiday periods.

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the website of the [European Commission](#) for a list of airlines banned within the EU and the website of the [US Federal Aviation Administration](#) for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

#### By land

China shares borders with Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Vietnam. The borders with Afghanistan, Bhutan and India are closed. It is possible to enter China from all the other countries with a valid Chinese visa. However, travellers are advised to enquire about the status of the border crossings before setting out; the authorities can close them sporadically due to changes in the government policy.

### By sea

Regular ferry services connect China with Japan and South Korea.

## HONG KONG

### By air

Chek Lap Kok Airport ([HKG](#)) on Lantau island in Hong Kong (SAR) is one of the major air hubs of the world. A specialised police unit is permanently stationed there and on constant patrol.

### By land

Travellers to Guangdong province can take the express train from Kowloon (Hong Kong) to Guangzhou, which reaches its destination in less than two hours. The rail service is being upgraded to provide an alternative to air travel between Hong Kong and cities on the eastern Chinese coast.

### By sea

Catamarans and hovercraft link Hong Kong to Macao (SAR) and Chinese cities in the Pearl river delta, including Shenzhen and Guangzhou in Guangdong province.

## MACAO

### By air

Macao International Airport ([MFM](#)), located on the eastern coast of Taipa island, is an important transport hub for southern China. Security at the airport is adequate.

### By sea

Ferries and other forms of water transport are available between Macao and two major terminals in Hong Kong: the Hong Kong China Ferry Terminal and the Shun Tak Centre. There are ferry services between Macao (Taipa Temporary Ferry Terminal) and Shekou (Shenzhen) as well as Shenzhen Airport Fuyong Ferry Terminal. Macao is also connected to Wanzai Harbour in Zhuhai (Guangdong), as well as other locations in Guangdong.

### By land

Several bus companies operate between Macao and major cities in Guangdong through two major gateways, Portas do Cerco (Barrier Gateway) and the COTAI Frontier Post. The former opens from 07.00 to midnight while the latter operates between 09.00 and 20.00.

## IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

	Passport Required?	Visa Required?	Return Ticket Required?
British	Yes	Yes	Yes
Australian	Yes	Yes	Yes
Canadian	Yes	Yes	Yes
USA	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other EU	Yes	Yes	Yes

### Visas

All nationals, including those referred to in the above chart, require visas to enter and stay in China; Hong Kong and Macao have different visa requirements for different nationalities. Taiwanese nationals entering the mainland are exempt from visa and other entry requirements. However, they should be in possession of a valid 'travel pass' to enter the mainland.

Business travellers are required to obtain business visas (Visa M) and provide an official invitation from the company or institution in China at the time of application, in addition to an invitation letter issued by an authorised Chinese agency. Tourist visa (Visa L) applications require an invitation letter from a duly authorised tourism unit, along with photocopy of hotel reservation and round-trip airline ticket. The invitation letter can also be issued by an individual, a company or an institution in China; however, if sponsored by an individual, a copy of his or her photo-identification should be attached. Transit passengers are required to obtain a transit visa (Visa G). Nationals of 45 countries do not require a transit visa while visiting Beijing, Chengdu, Chongqing, Dalian, Guangzhou, Kunming, Shanghai, Xian and Shenyang for up to 72 hours, provided they have a valid onward ticket. These countries include EU member states, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Qatar, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, UK and US. Holders of valid APEC Business Travel Card automatically hold multiple-entry visa valid for three years, but they can only stay in China for no more than two months in each visit.

Visa fees vary by nationality. Single-entry visas are normally valid for three months, double-entry visas for six months, and multiple-entry visas for six, 12 or 24 months. Multiple entry-visas valid for up to ten years are available to US nationals for touristic and business purposes. All visa applications should be made one month in advance. The express service requires three working days and the regular service takes four days. Postal applications will be processed and returned within 5-14 working days, if all the documentation is in good order. Travellers intending to work or stay longer in China should obtain relevant visas. Further information can be found on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [website](#).

Tighter immigration laws are in place for foreigners working or living in the country beyond the time period stated in their employment contract or visa. These include reducing the minimum duration of residence certificate, which is required by foreigners with a work visa (Visa Z); foreigners will be required to provide their biometric data when applying for residence certificates; foreigners violating Chinese immigration laws or overstaying the period allowed by their visa may be given an exit deadline, fined, or in some cases, barred from entering China for ten years.

From 1 August 2015, Harbin (Heilongjiang province) will offer a 72-hour visa-free entry for international transit passengers; this policy covers nationals from 51 countries ([please click here for the list of countries](#)). Such travellers can enjoy a 72-hour stay, provided they have third country visas and onward tickets to leave for that country. The same visa-free policy is already in place in Beijing, Chengdu (Sichuan province), Chongqing, Dalian (Liaoning province), Guangzhou (Guangdong province), Guilin (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Hangzhou (Zhejiang province), Kunming (Yunnan province), Shanghai and Shenyang (Liaoning).

#### **Entry/Exit requirements**

All foreign visitors require a passport valid for at least six months. Foreigners applying for residency in Beijing or Qingdao (Shandong province) need to submit a Certificate of No Criminal Conviction (CNCC), commonly known as a police clearance letter. The CNCC must be notarised in the foreign national's home country and authenticated by a Chinese consulate abroad, with a Chinese translation attached including the translation company's official seal. This requirement does not apply to short-term business travellers with normal business visas.

China does not recognise dual nationality. The national currency, the renminbi, can be taken in and out of the country, but only up to the value of 6,000 yuan. There are no restrictions on foreign currency, except that you should declare any cash that exceeds \$6,000 (or its equivalent in another currency); permission from a Chinese bank is required to export cash exceeding \$6,000. Other requirements may change at short notice and should be checked before departure.

Visitors intending to travel to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) must obtain a Tibet Travel Permit (TTP) in addition to the Chinese visa. Permits are issued by the Tibet Tourism Bureau and have to be arranged via a local tour company. Permits are issued to both solo travellers and mixed nationality groups. Travellers entering from Nepal must ensure that they obtain the required permit from the Chinese embassy in Kathmandu. Foreigners should apply for the permit at least 15 days prior to their arrival. Travel to restricted areas such as Mt Everest, Syaka, Tsedang, Nagri and Nyingchi requires special permits; travellers should contact their tour operator for further information. It is mandatory to be accompanied by a local guide at all times.

Restrictions on travel to TAR are periodically imposed by the Chinese authorities at short notice. These restrictions may include: the suspension of the issuing of travel permits for TAR, sometimes for an unspecified length of time; suspension of any travel to or from TAR; certain nationalities may not be issued a permit at all; restrictions on travel may be placed in certain areas within TAR and access to some areas might be totally closed. Such restrictions can also affect travellers who already possess a permit. Travellers should check with tour operators or travel agents about the restrictions and necessary documents required.

#### **Procedures**

Foreign visitors do not need to fill in a customs declaration form listing valuables, but must fill in arrival and departure documents when entering and leaving the country, as well as a health declaration form. Customs and immigration procedures at international airports are not rigorous; however, political events can sometimes make visas more difficult to obtain or renew. Travellers should register their place of residence with the local Public Security Bureau within 24 hours of arrival; hotels usually perform this procedure.

#### **HONG KONG**

##### **Visas**

Most visitors do not require a visa for visits of less than one month. Travellers can check their visa requirements on the official [website](#) of the Government of Hong Kong. Foreigners in Hong Kong can obtain a visa for China within a day. The cost of a tourist visa is \$160 and transit visa is \$84. Visitors intending to stay in Hong Kong without work are required to have return or onward ticket unless they are transiting to mainland China or Macao.

Visas for Hong Kong are issued through Chinese embassies and consulates. For visa extensions, contact the Immigration Department, Second Floor, Wanchai Tower Two, Seven Gloucester Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong, China (Tel: +852 2824 6111; Fax: +852 2877 7711).

##### **Entry/Exit requirements**

Passports must be valid for at least one month from your fixed departure date from Hong Kong for a single-entry visa, 12 months for a double-entry visa, six months for a multiple-entry visa, and 18 months for a 12-month multiple-entry visa. There is no limit on the amount of Hong Kong dollars that you can take into or out of the country.

##### **Procedures**

Immigration is reasonably quick. Customs is divided into 'red' and 'green' respectively for those with and without dutiable items to declare. Baggage generally arrives promptly on the carousels. There are money-changing facilities on the 'air side' concourse.

#### **MACAO**

##### **Visas**

Nationals of Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominica, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Tanzania do not require visas for stays up to 90 days, while citizens of Australia, Canada, Chile, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Malaysia, Monaco, Namibia, New Zealand, Philippines, Samoa, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, US and Uruguay can undertake visa-free travel and stay for up to 30 days. Nationals of UK do not require visas for 180 days. Nationals of most countries, except Bangladesh, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, can apply for visas upon arrival at the immigration counter. Nationals of remaining countries are required to have a visa.

##### **Entry/Exit requirements**

All travellers should have a passport or a valid travel document.

#### **DEPARTURE TAX**

- Airport tax is included in the price of the ticket.

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## INTERNAL TRAVEL

### BY AIR

China has an extensive domestic air network, though central and western provinces are less well served. China Southern, China Eastern and Air China (the national carrier) are the main long-haul international airlines. Privately owned Cathay Pacific is the de facto flag carrier in Hong Kong.

Delays to flights are endemic and often major; only a small percentage of flights are on schedule. A survey published in 2013 revealed that the country's mainland airports, mainly in Beijing and Shanghai, are worst affected.

Flights can be overbooked during important [national holiday](#) periods and personnel should make reservations in advance. Procedures at China's airports are easy to follow, with all signs and announcements in English, as well as Chinese. Passengers are required to arrive at the airport 90 minutes before departure time. Baggage theft at the country's airports is a concern.

### BY ROAD

Road transport is increasingly viable as more modern highways are constructed. The highways are short by international standards, linking neighbouring cities such as Beijing and Tianjin, Chengdu and Chongqing, and Shanghai and Hangzhou. For longer journeys, car travel is unlikely to be suitable because of the time and distances involved. Travelling after dark outside major cities is not recommended. Foreigners intending to drive in the country need a Chinese driver's licence and may need to take a driving test. Foreigners on short-term visits should ask their hotel to provide them with a chauffeur-driven car. Copies of residence permits and the identification and visa pages of passports should be accepted in most cases. Travellers should carry a card stating their particulars in Chinese (in characters, not romanised form).

The length of journeys the driver will undertake varies, but for comparatively short trips (for example between the aforementioned cities), road travel is convenient. Traffic drives on the right. Foreigners travelling to Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) should carry identification to expedite passage through security checkpoints. Foreigners travelling in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) should adopt similar measures.

Longer distance travel can be time consuming and inefficient. Members who chose to conduct long-distance overland travel should ensure that they have adopted appropriate journey management procedures that take into account the need to for a high degree of self-sufficiency given the potential lack of supply facilities (food, water and petrol), limited mobile communications networks, and varying quality of infrastructure. Members should also be comfortable with procedures needed to respond to any potential incident, including traffic accidents, roads blocked by localised protests or roads damaged due to natural disasters.

Most major cities have car rental outlets, but foreigners should use an alternative means of transport unless accustomed to the often chaotic driving conditions and able to read the road signs. Traffic signals are often missing at key locations and road closures are either inadequately marked or not marked at all. Traffic laws are frequently violated and the rate of traffic accidents in China is among the highest in the world. Motorists should not linger at the scene of a serious traffic accident in which they have been involved, as there is a risk of being verbally or physically attacked; instead, they should return to a secure place, if possible, and contact the police.

The quality of inter-city buses varies greatly, particularly in more remote areas. If travelling by bus, select an operator through an international tourist company and enquire into its safety record. Ensure that the vehicle is equipped with essential safety provisions, such as reliable radio communications, and that drivers are thoroughly vetted.

### BY TAXI

Taxi services are available in the major cities, including Beijing, Chengdu, Chongqing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Tianjin and Xian. Many city centres are congested and taxis can find it difficult to get around. Travellers are likely to face problems hiring a taxi without interpreters because most drivers do not speak English. As such, it is advisable to have name of the destination written down in Mandarin by hotel staff or local contacts.

### BY TRAIN

Rail travel is an alternative to air travel on short routes. Many business executives use the Shanghai-Suzhou-Nanjing rail route – one of the most comfortable and modern in China – as a more convenient alternative to flying the short distances between the cities. The high speed rail network has witnessed considerable development and is a viable option for long-distance journeys. A high-speed rail line connecting the cities of Beijing and Guangzhou takes around eight hours to complete the journey and passes through 28 cities. More recently, another high-speed rail line – linking Nanjing (Jiangsu province) to Ningbo (Zhejiang province) – began operations in early July 2013.

China International Travel Service (CITS) offices are inefficient and unreliable, and foreigners wishing to buy train tickets should do so at their hotel if at all possible. Tickets must usually be paid for in cash and can often be difficult to obtain without 'surcharges' (many tickets are only obtained through unofficial networks of contacts who must be paid). Tickets can be booked 20 days in advance.

Security at railway stations in major cities has deteriorated considerably, mostly because of the vast numbers of rural migrants who use the stations as dormitories. Baggage theft and robbery are common in the dense crowds that are to be found both in the entrance hall and on the platforms. However, foreign business travellers can use the spacious first-class waiting rooms to avoid crowded platforms. Security on short train journeys is generally good. Thieves generally target travellers on long-distance routes, on which they can operate while passengers are asleep.

### BY OTHER MEANS

#### By bus

Buses are not recommended for business travellers, as they are extremely crowded and frequented by pickpockets.

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## PRACTICALITIES

## LANGUAGE

Mandarin is the official language, known locally as Putonghua. It is spoken in business circles even in southern China, where Cantonese is the vernacular. Chinese business people are increasingly learning to speak English, but in many cases, an interpreter is required. English is not widely spoken outside business circles.

### Hong Kong special administrative region

Chinese and English are the official languages. Business is conducted in English, which all Hong Kong business people speak, though they may converse in Cantonese with their colleagues. Overall, the standard of spoken English outside business circles has deteriorated in recent years, making communication for non-Cantonese speakers increasingly difficult in many routine transactions.

### Macao special administrative region

Chinese and Portuguese are the official languages. Cantonese is the most widely spoken dialect, though Mandarin is also spoken and visitors should not hesitate to use it. English is the most widely spoken foreign language, including in casinos and many hotels. Portuguese is spoken by very few residents, but is still one of the official languages and is used by the police and government offices.

## MONEY

The renminbi (Rmb) is the official currency of China; it is also known as the yuan. The use of foreign currency is prohibited, and any unused Chinese currency must be converted into foreign currency prior to departure from the country. Travellers are advised to carry small-denomination notes to pay taxi fares and other minor expenses. Major credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express can be used in business-class hotels, Friendship Stores, restaurants and larger department stores, but are not widely accepted in smaller shops. Traveller's cheques can be cashed at most hotels, which are usually more efficient than banks, though provide less good value. ATMs that accept foreign credit cards are available in most major cities, Bank of China being the most reliable and bilingual. The maximum cash withdrawal per day is Rmb 3,000.

Foreign currency can be exchanged at banks and some hotels. Business visitors should not change foreign currency illegally on the black market, as exchange rates are less competitive and the authorities launch frequent crackdowns on black marketeers. In the south, particularly in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, Hong Kong dollars are in wide circulation and (though officially illegal) are used in many daily transactions. Counterfeit currency is widespread and often convincing, and should be guarded against. Counterfeit notes are often produced from slightly thicker paper; newly obtained bills should be compared with those already owned for variations in colour and texture.

### Hong Kong

The Hong Kong dollar (HK\$) is the legal currency and is pegged to the US dollar. Visitors can exchange currency at Chek Lap Kok airport, though rates are usually better in exchange offices (preferably banks) in Kowloon and on Hong Kong island. Local currency can also be obtained by using internationally recognised credit cards at banks' ATMs. Traveller's cheques are accepted at banks and hotels. Credit cards are widely accepted by hotels and other tourist establishments. ATMs that accept foreign cards are widespread.

### Macao

The pataca (MOP\$) is the official currency. Credit cards are accepted by hotels, shops and restaurants. Traveller's cheques can be changed at banks and major hotels. Currency exchange offices are open 24 hours at Macao International airport. ATMs are widely available and mostly dispense local currency. Alternatively, most establishments accept payment in Hong Kong dollars.

## CULTURAL ISSUES AND ETIQUETTE

### General Cultural Tips

- It is customary to arrive slightly early for social engagements.
- When dining in a restaurant, discussing illness, death or tragic events is not appropriate as it is seen as bad luck.
- Restaurants usually close by 21.30. Expect to eat between 19.00 and 20.00.
- Conversation during a meal should focus heavily on giving compliments to the chef.
- Chinese eating habits may be less neat than in other countries. Food is often eaten with the hands and rice bowls lifted to the mouth. Spitting phlegm during meals is common. This is an accepted practice and is not intended to be discourteous.
- In many cases, foreigners will be expected to use chopsticks. Asking for a knife and fork may be insulting.
- Superstition is taken seriously. Four is an unlucky number associated with death. Some people will go to extraordinary lengths to avoid having the digit in their telephone number or address. Eight is a lucky number that is associated with wealth.
- The Chinese do not typically use exaggerated gestures or facial expressions while speaking, and may find them distracting when used by others.
- Gift giving is important and somewhat ritualised. Avoid gifts of great value, as they may embarrass a Chinese person and may be declined. Smaller tokens, such as souvenirs from your country, are seen as expressions of friendship and symbolise hope for success. Red or gold wrapping paper is appropriate. Black and white are colours of mourning. *This is a recommendation, please check your company/organisation's policy on gift-giving.*
- People often decline a gift several times before accepting it. Be persistent until they accept.
- It is customary to bring a gift when invited to someone's home such as fruit, candy or a souvenir from your home country.
- Political topics may be sensitive. China considers Taiwan as its province and not a country. Avoid criticism of China, its policies or leaders.
- Photography is not allowed in airports or government buildings.

### Business Cultural Tips

- Introductions are usually quite formal. The Chinese traditionally nod or bow slightly when greeting. However, handshaking is also common and appropriate.

- If greeted by the somewhat uncommon custom of applause, the appropriate response is to applaud back.
- Business cards are usually exchanged upon introductions. It is advisable to have yours printed in both English and Chinese and have a large supply. Use both hands to both present and receive cards. Read the card carefully before putting it on the table during the meeting. Never write on a business card or put it in your wallet or pocket. Carry a small card case. Do not put cards away until the end of the meeting.
- Chinese surnames always form the first part of the name. Hence, Hu Jintao is Mr Hu.
- Appointments should be made in advance.
- Punctuality is very important in China for both business and social engagements.
- When referring to the nation on formal documents or speeches, it is appropriate to use the full title: The People's Republic of China.
- Business dress is conservative. Men should wear a suit and tie, while women should wear either a dress or a skirt and blouse. Avoid low necklines or skirts above the knee.
- Business is not generally discussed over a meal, though you may be treated to a banquet during your stay. Banquets are often extremely lavish, involving many courses and considerable alcohol. Formal meals will often be accompanied by a series of toasts to the call of 'Gan Bei!' (Finish your glass!). Foreign guests could be expected to return the toast. It is also polite to invite the host or hostess to a return dinner – preferably in a hotel.
- If hosting a banquet, pay close attention to the seating plan, which should reflect the hierarchy of the guests' organisation.
- Open displays of emotion, such as anger, are frowned upon, particularly in business circles. If a foreigner becomes angry, their Chinese counterpart may react by laughing. This has nothing to do with humour or ridicule. It is one way of maintaining self-respect ('face'). Loss of face can be humiliating.
- Business personnel should plan their meetings well in advance as commercial activities are restricted during the Lunar New Year holiday period.

## TIPPING

Tipping is not officially allowed, but is becoming increasingly common. Restaurants and hotels may include a service charge of 10-15% in the bill. Taxi drivers do not expect to be tipped.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The country has extensive mobile network coverage, which suffers periodic government crackdowns. Stringent information security protocols are advised. Major GSM providers are China Mobile and China Unicom. Public phone booths are widely available. Travellers can also use pre-paid calling cards, which are available from hotels and convenience stores. Major hotels also have international direct dialling. Internet access is widely available throughout the country, though the use of certain websites may be regulated and others may be blocked entirely. Visitors may be required to present their passport before logging on.

## DIALLING CODES

DIALLING CODES	
Country Code	86
IDD Prefix (International Direct Dialling)	00
NDD Prefix (National Direct Dialling)	0

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Emergency Numbers	
Fire	119
Police	110

Ambulance services are not recommended. Contact [International SOS](#) for help with your medical situation.

## WORKING WEEK

- Working week: Monday to Friday
- Government departments, banks and private offices: 09.00-17.00/18.00, though some close between 12.00 and 14.00

## CLIMATE

Northern China is bitterly cold and dry in winter (November-March) and hot in summer (May-August). Central China is cold and wet in winter (December-February) and very hot and humid in summer (April-October). Southern China is mild in winter (January-March) and hot and humid in summer (April-September). Heavy rain occurs throughout the year. The best time to visit China is in the autumn (late September-October) or in the spring.

The average minimum and maximum temperatures in Beijing in January are -4°C (25°F) and 25°C (77°F) respectively while in Shanghai, they are 4°C (39°F) and 27°C (82°F) respectively. In Hong Kong, the average minimum and maximum temperatures are 17°C (63°F) and 28°C (82°F) respectively. The latest weather reports and forecast can be accessed at the China Meteorological Administration (CMA)'s [website](#).

## ELECTRICITY

Voltage: 220 volts  
Frequency: 50 Hz

Increased demand for electricity can lead to blackouts during the summer months (July-September).

These are the most common plug types used:



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## BACKGROUND BRIEF

### GEOGRAPHY

China is the world's third-largest country, after Russia and Canada. It is located in north-eastern Asia, along the Pacific Ocean coastline. With an area of 3.7m sq miles (9.6m sq km), it borders the following countries: Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Vietnam.

China's vast terrain includes plateaus, plains, basins, foothills, rivers and lakes. Approximately two-thirds of the country is mountainous. For administrative purposes, the country is divided into 23 provinces, five autonomous regions, four centrally administered municipalities and two special administrative regions. Apart from the capital Beijing, major cities include Chongqing, Shanghai and Tianjin.

Hong Kong island is situated on the southern coast of mainland China. It comprises Kowloon, the New Territories and 236 outlying islands.

### RECENT HISTORY

Paramount leader Deng Xiaoping gradually opened China to the outside world and launched far-reaching economic reforms in the wake of the death in 1976 of Mao Zedong, who as chairman of the Communist Party of China (CPC) had overseen a period of agricultural and educational reform, but also famine and a violent state-endorsed suppression of perceived critics of the party.

In the 1990s, China emerged as a manufacturing powerhouse and across the next two decades amassed a formidable trade surplus with the US, with which it forged a relationship of economic interdependency and diplomatic suspicion. The peaceful return in 1997 to Chinese sovereignty of the British colony of Hong Kong contrasted with persistent tensions with US-backed, independent and democratic Taiwan. The one-party state and communist structure endure unchallenged in mainland China under the leadership of a new generation of Communists led by former President Hu Jintao. In March 2013, parliament appointed Xi Jinping as the new president; Li Yuanhao was elected as the new vice-president.

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