

1. If you have an iPhone model less than 2 years old it should work in China; if not think about purchasing a newer one. Or consider an unlocked inexpensive (\$120) android phone from amazon or eBay – ideally with dual sim capability. (This will become your camera for most people, so consider the camera capability in the phone you purchase) The frequency format in China is just plain different. If you want to use both data and voice your phone that you purchased in the US may not work. Look for quad frequency capability. If you want to buy a new phone in the US for use in China, buy a sim card with a 1 or 3 month plan (like T-Mobile or Other) from Walmart or Walgreens and get your phone up and running in the US and load apps from there (see below for suggested apps). You can also use the internet in your house as your service if you don't want to buy a temporary sim card. Here is a phone that you could consider; you may want to compare it as a benchmark with others that are available as models change and improve. Cubot S208 Dual Sim Phone: http://www.gearbest.com/cell-phones/pp_24592.html. We bought this phone in China when my wife's US Samsung phone had unfortunate water damage – works fine for her needs and has google software unlike many Chinese phones.

2. Load the following free apps: QQ international, Pleco, Hanping, maps.me, China Air Quality, Baidu English search engine, Baidu Translator, and most important – **WeChat** → Get your family to load and use this app! Create an email in your QQ international account and begin to use it – let it be your Chinese email you give out.

3. For VOIP (talking to your friends back home over the internet) you have a couple of options that have worked for others in China. A Republic Phone, magicJack (an app is also available for your smartphone in China), Grove IP (free app available), and Google Phone app (not recommended but it may work if you add in Hangouts). If you port your home phone (transfer the number) to one of these services, you won't need to change your phone number while you are gone - people can contact you in China whenever you can get WiFi and leave messages. Additionally, FaceTime, skype, and other services work well in audio mode.

4. Computers – each of you need a good quality sturdy laptop and I suggest in addition to a laptop, a notepad device (iPad, mini, Samsung, etc.). We had a refurbished iPad mini and it works better for some things than our laptops. I bought an inexpensive Dell note book and it struggles to do much.

5. VPN – I am aware of a number of VPN Providers that have been used. Astril (a legacy VPN for CTP), Express VPN, vyperVPN, and Pure VPN (my choice) have been used successfully but there may be other providers. Look specifically for capability in China, for the number of systems onto which software can be loaded, how many users can be on at one time, and of course cost. It will be about \$50 to \$100 for one year subscription. If you are unfamiliar with VPN, it essentially opens an encrypted (secure) connection between your computer and an internet location in another country (most often the U.S.) and then goes to the places you search from that location. By doing this, it appears that your computer is not in China but at the location to which you are connected (i.e. the US). It may be a little slower, but you can go places you might be blocked from going while in China (Google). It also provides security for sites where you may want that level of security – such as your bank, any work back home, and financial investments. Get it about a month before you leave and practice using it in the US on your phone, mobile devices, and laptop. You should have some sort of internet in your apartment, but most consider it intermittent or sketchy (see number 7).

6. Ask your bank in China to enable your account for online transactions. Then you can use this account to purchase items over the internet with the help of a Chinese friend. NOTE: I discovered that in China my official

name at my bank is: FISHERSCOTTARDEN. Last name first, no spaces, and all CAPs – straight from your passport – and just as they would write characters. This may help sometime when you are trying to register with your name.

7. Go to the “tech mart” in your town and get a mobile Wi-Fi (mifi) with a one year sim card. It will cost about \$100 - \$120 for the device including a one year plan. You will then have backup and portable internet – bus, classroom, travel, etc. For many, **internet is the single biggest complaint** about China. You will NOT want to use this Wi-Fi to stream movies or video or music as it will consume the data you have pre-purchased very quickly, however, you should be able to use it 3 or 4 hours each day for general internet surfing and email.

8. Taobao.com, aliexpress.com, Amazon.cn, and tvc mall.com are where you can shop on line for ANYTHING you need while in China. You may also want to order a few items from Amazon (US) before you leave or have a student order them in China from the above sites: ezCast (turns you iPad or android into a broadcast to your TV), PowerPoint media pointer, ppt projector, audio speaker, lockable USB thumb drive. I have been using a Flash Blue 8GB thumb drive and it holds all of my material. I had everything backed up on a second USB. Some universities have very good A/V support, others do not. In speaking with those you will replace, ask regarding equipment like: projectors, computers, version of windows, and audio resources in the classroom.

9. When you arrive in China, have someone help you go to a phone provider (China Mobile or China Unicom) and put a sim card in the phone you brought (with the dual sim style phone like the one above, you just fill the empty slot). As I noted, my wife got her phone wet (ewh!) and it failed shortly after. In the weeks it took to receive a replacement, we put her sim card into the dual sim phone I have and it worked for both numbers. Getting phone service is easy and unlike the US, phones and service plans are generally sold separately. My phone plan runs about \$15 per month for basic data, voice, and text. If you have **WeChat**, you can pay your bill online once you have a bank account in China and hook your phone number to it.

10. Avoid anything Google! It is a fine company, fine products, but aggressively blocked by the government in most cases. Watch this TED Talk with an eye on technology to understand why:

http://www.ted.com/talks/michael_anti_behind_the_great_firewall_of_china

Here are a few more ted talks you should watch, realizing you may not agree with the speaker, but it will give you a view of the Chinese mind, culture, and approach to things: http://www.ted.com/talks/yang_lan

http://www.ted.com/talks/martin_jacques_understanding_the_rise_of_china

http://www.ted.com/talks/eric_x_li_a_tale_of_two_political_systems

http://www.ted.com/talks/shaolan_learn_to_read_chinese_with_ease

(Purchase the book online “I Can Read That” if you want an easy way to get started with characters. I had these first 100 or so characters written on two decks of playing cards by a Chinese friend and go thru them like flash cards. You will see these in subways, on store fronts, maps, and possibly gain back a small amount of literacy. Another book you may like is Dreaming in Chinese by Fallows)

Bonus!: If you plan to go on trips with Marvin, sign up for Delta Frequent Flyer program. It will allow you to earn points and by the time you’re finished you may have a free round trip ticket. United is also connected to another frequent flyer alliance in China. You may want this membership as well. Between the two you should be covered.