



Before getting on the plane to China there are certain things that must be in order. With all of this checked off you are ready to go!

PASSPORT

Your passport needs a minimum of one pair of blank facing visa pages and at least 6 months validity after your arrival in China, even if you are just staying for a week. Children must travel on their own passports.

VISA

You can stay for up to 72 hours in a few of the bigger Chinese cities without a visa, but chances are you need one for your trip. Start your visa procedure research a few months before departure. Chinese visa rules depend on your nationality, where in the world you apply for the visa, and the purpose of your stay. Make sure you have all the documentation they ask for. You might be asked to present invitation letter(s) and copies of airline tickets, hotel bookings and itinerary.

VACCINES

No special vaccines are required for China, but there's no harm looking up Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's webpage for recommendations. <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/china>

INSURANCE

Never travel without travel insurance. Make sure it covers your entire stay, and everyone you are traveling with, especially children. If you have cancelation protection included, double check that it covers the total cost of everyone you have paid for. You might not be insured if you travel to high altitudes (like Tibet) or do certain high risk activities, so check your itinerary and protection plan if you have exotic expeditions planned.

MONEY

Contact your bank to check your card is not blocked for use outside your continent, as they sometimes do that to avoid stolen credit card information from being misused in other countries. While you're at it, ask them about any fees for withdrawing money abroad, and the exchange rate.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Collect the emergency numbers of your tour operator, embassy, insurance company, bank, mobile company, and your doctor at home. Keep these somewhere easily accessible, and not only on your phone.

Important Chinese Numbers:

- Police: 110 • Ambulance: 120
- Fire: 119 • Traffic accidents: 122
- Exit & Entry Administration (Visa) Office of the Beijing Public Security Bureau (PSB)
- Information desk: 8402 0101
- Customer Service Line: 8401 5300 or 8401 5316

MAKE COPIES OF IMPORTANT PAPERS

Keep copies of passports, visas, insurance, medical reports, a list of all prescriptions, and all other important documentation electronically in a cloud online or as an attachment to an email you have sent to yourself. This precaution can save you a lot of time and trouble should anything happen.

PREPARE YOUR PHONE AND TABLET

International calls and data roaming are still very expensive, so make sure you purchase an international service plan from your mobile company before departure; this can save you a lot of money. If you can't live without Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, you need to have a VPN (virtual private network) account in order to outsmart the Great Firewall. The Chinese government successfully censors a number of international websites, but google "China and VPN" and the internet will give you the solution.

THE LATEST INFORMATION

While the Great Wall and the Forbidden City will not likely change location anytime soon, everything else will. Buy the latest editions of guide books and look carefully for the publishing date on internet articles before you go. This is especially important if you plan on traveling without a set program.

BUY "CHINA IN YOUR HANDS"

If you read this book before arriving in China, I promise you, your trip will be a lot more enjoyable. Not because I magically can take away the bad stuff, but at least you will be prepared for the most unpleasant surprises. This book will make sure you are mentally prepared and excited about going!

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Have a safe journey!

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