

INTRODUCTION

China is located in the eastern part of the Asian continent and on the western coast of the Pacific Ocean. Its land area covers approximately 9.6 million square kilometres and its coastlines a total 18,000 kilometres. China boasts meandering mountains, gorgeous plateaus and great lakes.

CAPITAL

Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. Beijing is one of the famous historical and cultural cities, and one of the ancient capitals in the world. The 29th Olympic Games will be held in Beijing in 2008.

POPULATION

China consists of 56 ethnic groups with a population of 1.3 billion.

TIME ZONE

China uses "Beijing time" as the standard time for the entire nation, which is eight hours earlier than Greenwich Mean Time.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Chinese is the most common language in China today, however the official language is Mandarin.

CURRENCY

The Chinese currency is called Renminbi (RMB) and the unit is yuan and subsidiary units are jiao and fen. Yuan, jiao and fen are issued in bills and there are also one yuan, five jiao, one jiao and fen in coins. AUD\$1 = approx. ¥6.19

CLIMATE

Because China is so vast, its climate varies. Most of China is in the temperate zone. Its southern part is in the tropical and subtropical zones, and its northern part is close to the frigid zone.

ELECTRICITY

220V AC current.

FOOD

Chinese culinary art has a long history and enjoys a high reputation in the world. Chinese food is one of the main contents of a visit to China.

VISAS

Foreign tourists must apply for visas at China's foreign affairs offices, consulates or other organisations authorised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A group of five tourists or above can apply for a group tourist visa. Counsellor-General of the People's Republic of China, Sydney - sydney.chineseconsulate.org

GETTING THERE

At present, China has opened over 980 domestic, 130 international and 24 regional air routes. Qantas, Cathay Pacific Airways, Air China, China Eastern Airlines and China Southern Airlines operate regular flights from Sydney to China.

GETTING AROUND

The easiest way for tourists to get around China is by train or air. All the major cities offer express trains and direct internal flights to the main tourist cities.

ACCOMMODATION

China has more than 8,000 star-rated hotels across the country as well as various common hotels such as hostels and youth inns. The hotels' facilities are up to the international standards. Most hotels have satellite English and Japanese TV programs.

SHOPPING

Main Chinese tourist souvenirs include silk, brocade, embroidery, Chinese painting and calligraphy, traditional Chinese herbal medicines, carvings, tea, folk art works and local products.

MEDICAL SERVICE

To protect the rights and interests of foreign tourists, the Chinese government has set up special medical centres with good conditions in large cities.

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

New Year - 01 Jan, one day off
Spring Festival - The first day of the first lunar month, seven days off
International Labor Day - 01 May, seven days off
National Day - 01 Oct, seven days off

THINGS TO DO

Beijing

Beijing has become an international modern city, however features many historic and cultural tourist attractions. Main tourist spots include Palace Museum, Temple of Heaven, Summer Palace, the Great Wall and Ming Tombs.

Shanghai

Shanghai is the economic centre and foreign trade port of China. Tourist attractions in Shanghai include Yuyuan Garden, Jade Buddha Temple, Shanghai Museum and Former Residence of Lu Xun. A boat tour on the Huangpu River provides a good opportunity to view the architecture of the buildings along its banks. Shanghai is a 'shopping paradise' with the busiest shopping centres being those along Nanjing Road and Huaihai Road.

Guangzhou

Guangzhou, the largest city in south China is known as the 'City of Flowers'. Main tourist attractions include the Chen Clan Shrine, Six-Banyan Temple, Yuexiu Park, Qingping Market and White Cloud Mountain.

Xi'an

Xi'an, capital city of Shaanxi Province was the starting point of the famous 'Silk Road' to the west. Its main tourist attractions include the famous Museum of Qin Shihuang's Terra-Cotta Warriors and Horses, Greater Wild Goose Pagoda, Drum Tower, Huaqing Pool and the ruins of Banpo Village.

Guilin

Lying by the Lijiang River, Guilin is a world-renowned tourist city, with four distinct seasons and a pleasant climate and beautiful scenery. The unique mountains nearby are well known, as well as the rivers and karst caves. Main tourist attractions include Lijiang River, Seven-Star Cave, Elephant Trunk Hill and Third Sister Liu Song Fair. A boat ride on the Lijiang River will allow tourists to enjoy the scenery.



Temple of Heaven



Local Children



The Great Wall of China



Panda



Oriental Pearl TV Tower



Chinese Cuisine

