Tips for Travelers to the People’s Republic of China
(From www.travel.state.gov)

Foreword
Travel to China can be a rich and rewarding adventure. Whether you are a novice or are an experienced world traveler, we think that this guide will be of assistance to you as you plan a safe and enjoyable trip. Remember: If you encounter serious difficulties in your travels, American consuls at U.S. embassies and consulates abroad are there to help you.

If you are planning to stay for a long period of time, or are visiting an area that is experiencing political unrest or other problems, please register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the State Department's travel registration website. Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency. In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare or whereabouts may not be released without your expressed authorization. Remember to leave a detailed itinerary and the numbers or copies of your passport or other citizenship documents with a friend or relative in the United States.

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About China
History
China is the oldest uninterrupted major world civilization, with records dating back over 3,500 years. Successive dynasties developed a system of bureaucratic control which gave the agrarian-based Chinese an advantage over neighboring nomadic and hill cultures. Chinese civilization was further strengthened by the development of a common written language that bridged the gaps among the country's many local languages and dialects.

The People's Republic of China
The People's Republic of China (PRC) was established on October 1, 1949, with Beijing as its capital city. It is the third largest country in terms of territory, bordering most Asian countries and Russia. China is undergoing rapid, profound economic and social growth and development. Political power remains centralized in the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese Government is subordinate to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP); its role is to implement party policies. The primary branches of state power are the National People's Congress (NPC), the President (the head of state), and the State Council. Under the Chinese constitution, the NPC is the highest branch of state power in China. When the NPC is not in session, its permanent organ, the Standing Committee, exercises state power.

The People
With well over one billion citizens, China is easily the world's most populous country. The largest ethnic group is the Han Chinese, who constitute about 92% of the total population. The remaining 8% are Zhuang, Manchu, Hui, Miao, Uygur, Yi, Tibetan, Mongol, and Korean.

Language
There are several major Chinese dialects and many subdialects. The Beijing dialect, often called Mandarin (or Putonghua), is taught in all schools and is the medium of government. Almost two-thirds of Han Chinese are native speakers of Mandarin; the rest, concentrated in southwest and southeast China, speak one of the other major Chinese dialects.
Tourism
Modern tourist facilities are available in major cities, but facilities in smaller provincial cities and rural areas are frequently below international standards. (For more information see the section “Areas of Interest” on page 22.)

How to Prepare for a Safe Trip
A little planning and knowledge will go a long way toward making your trip to the PRC go smoothly. Learning more about China and obeying the laws and respecting the customs will make your stay as pleasant and incident-free as possible.

Consular Information Sheets, Public Announcements & Travel Warnings
The State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs is responsible for providing assistance and information to U.S. citizens traveling abroad. Consular Affairs issues Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, and Public Announcements. Consular Information Sheets are issued for every country in the world. They include such information as the location of the U.S. embassy or consulate in the subject country, health conditions, political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties.

The State Department also issues Travel Warnings and Public Announcements. Travel Warnings are issued when the State Department decides to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. Countries to which travel is not recommended will have Travel Warnings as well as Consular Information Sheets. Public Announcements are issued as a means to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers.

How to Access Consular Information Sheets, Public Announcements & Travel Warnings
By Internet: The most convenient source of information about travel and consular services is the Consular Affairs homepage on the Internet. The website address is http://travel.state.gov.

By Telephone: Consular Information Sheets and Travel Warnings may be heard any time by dialing the office of American Citizens Services at or 1-888-407-4747 or 202-647-5225.

By Fax: From your fax machine, dial (202) 647-3000, using the handset as you would a regular telephone. The system will instruct you on how to proceed.

By Mail: Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements can be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped business-size envelope to: Office of American Citizens Services, Room 4811, Department of State, Washington, DC 20520-4818. On the outside envelope, write the name of the country or countries needed in the lower left corner.

Registration
All American citizens visiting China for a month or more are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Beijing or the nearest U.S. consulate. Registration will assist our posts in China in locating you in the event of an emergency at home or in replacing a lost or stolen passport.

You should also photocopy the data page of your passport and keep it in a separate place from your passport. In the event that your passport is lost, stolen, or in the possession of government officials, travel agents or tourism representatives, you will have the requisite information available, as well as proof of your identity and U.S. citizenship.

Passport Information
Remember to safeguard your U.S. passport. The loss or theft of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the police in the city where the loss occurs as well as to the U.S. embassy or nearest consulate general. Americans who give away or sell their passport in China could lead to arrest and prosecution in both China and in the United States. When you get your visa photos taken, make sure you get two extra copies, so that you can use them as passport photos.
so that they will be available in case of loss or theft of your passport. Keep these extra photos in a secure place separate from your passport.

To obtain a U.S. passport for a minor under age 14, both parents' signatures are now required on the passport application form, or, if only one parent is applying, a signed statement from the non-applying parent, or evidence proving sole custody of the minor. For more information, please refer to the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Internet site at http://travel.state.gov.

**Entry and Other Visa Requirements**

To enter the People's Republic of China, a U.S. citizen must have a valid U.S. passport and Chinese visa. Americans arriving without valid passports and Chinese visas are generally not permitted to enter China and may also be subject to fines. Please do not rely on Chinese host organizations claiming to be able to arrange visa issuance upon arrival.

For information about entry requirements and restricted areas, travelers may consult the Embassy of the People's Republic of China (PRC). (See addresses list at the end of this pamphlet.) For a list of services and frequently asked visa questions and answers, travelers can view the Chinese Embassy's web sites at [www.china-embassy.org](http://www.china-embassy.org) or visa@china-embassy.org. Visas are required to transit China, even if one is only changing flights at an airport. Persons transiting China on the way to and from Mongolia or North Korea or who plan to re-enter from the Hong Kong or Macau Special Administrative Regions should be sure to obtain visas allowing multiple entries. Permits are required to visit Tibet as well as many remote areas not normally open to foreigners.

Travelers should note that international flights departing China are routinely overbooked, making reconfirmation of departure reservations and early airport check-in essential. Passengers must pay a RMB 90 airport user fee (approximately $12 US) when departing China on international flights and RMB 50 airport fee (approximately US $7.20) for all domestic flights.

Americans who overstay or otherwise violate the terms of their Chinese visas will be subject to fines and departure delays and may be subject to detention.

In addition to the requirements above, long-term visitors to China may be required to provide evidence of an AIDS test. Americans who plan to work in China must obtain a work visa before they begin working. There have recently been a number of cases where Americans who entered on a tourist visa were found to be working without the required visa and consequently asked to depart China after paying a fine. In some cases, employers have asked the Americans to begin working while promising to obtain the work visa. However, according to the Public Security Bureau, applying for a change of visa while already working is considered a violation of the law.

**Currency Regulations**

Chinese currency is called yuan or, more commonly, renminbi (RMB).

Foreign currency (cash or traveler's checks) may be exchanged for Chinese currency at licensed exchange facilities of the Bank of China and other authorized banks.

Money exchange facilities are available at major airports, hotels, and department stores. Major brands of traveler's checks are accepted at such exchange facilities and cash advances against a credit card can be arranged, a service charge is usually added. Consult with your bank before departing the United States to be sure that your brand of check or credit card will be accepted. Major credit cards (American Express, Mastercard and Visa) are accepted by most major hotels and in many well-known restaurants. ATMs compatible with US bankcards are also available throughout Hong Kong and to a limited extent in major Mainland cities such as Shanghai and Beijing.

**Customs Regulations**

Items such as watches, radios, cameras, and calculators imported duty free for personal use may not be transferred or
sold to others. Gifts and articles carried on behalf of others must be declared to the customs inspector and are subject to duty.

**Chinese customs regulations prohibit the import or export of the following items:**

(a) Arms, ammunition, and explosives;
(b) Radio transmitter-receivers and principal parts;
(c) Chinese currency (renminbi);
(d) Books, films, records, tapes, etc. which are “detrimental to China's politics, economy, culture, and ethics” (e.g. pornographic or religious content)
(e) Poisonous drugs and narcotics;
(f) Infected animal or plant products; and
(g) Infected foodstuffs.

Note: Videotapes may be confiscated by Chinese customs to determine that they do not violate prohibitions noted in item (d), above. Tapes are sometimes held for several months before being returned. (There is no guarantee that they will ever be returned.)

**Export of the following items is also prohibited:**

(a) Valuable cultural relics and rare books relating to Chinese history, culture, and art;
(b) Rare animals, rare plants and their seeds; and
(c) Precious metals and diamonds and articles made from them.

Antiques and imitations approved for export are marked with a red wax seal.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, improper glazing of some dinnerware for sale in China can cause lead contamination in food. Therefore, unless you have proof of its safety, dinnerware purchased in China should be used for decorative purposes only. Chinese commercial shipments of dinnerware to the United States are tested to conform to U.S. safety standards.

**Movie cameras and videotaping equipment should be declared upon entry into China.**

Chinese customs officials encourage the use of an ATA (Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission) Carnet for the temporary admission of professional equipment, commercial samples, and/or goods for exhibitions and fair purposes. ATA Carnet Headquarters, located at the U.S. Council for International Business, 1212 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036, issues and guarantees the ATA Carnet in the United States. For additional information, please call telephone (212) 354-4480, or send e-mail to atacarnet@uscib.org or visit http://www.uscib.org for details.

Information concerning regulations and procedures governing items that may be brought into China is available through the Chinese Embassy and Consulates in the United States. (See the Chinese Embassy and consulates addresses listed at the end of this pamphlet.)

**Crime**
China has a low crime rate; however crime has increased in the past few years, principally in the major cities. U.S. citizens and other foreigners have seldom been victims of violent crime. For up-to-date information get the latest Consular Information Sheet for China. (See section under How to Access Consular Information Sheets, Public Announcements & Travel Warnings on page 4.)

**Legal Matters**
Remember: while in China, you are subject to Chinese laws and regulations. Laws in China sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and do not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Please exercise caution and carefully obey local laws. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating the law, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned.
Chinese laws prohibit public demonstrations without a valid permit obtained from the Chinese Public Security Bureau in the city where the demonstration is planned.

Chinese authorities have seized documents, literature, and letters which they deem to be pornographic or political in nature or those which are intended for religious proselytizing. If you seek to enter China with religious materials in a quantity greater than what is considered needed for personal use, you could be detained and fined.

Religious proselytizing or passing out of religious materials is strictly forbidden. Americans suspected of engaging in such activities have been fined, arrested or deported.

Magazines with photographs considered commonplace in Western countries, including some advertisements, may be regarded as pornography. Books, films, records, tapes, etc., which are “detrimental to China’s politics, economy, culture, and ethics” will be seized by Chinese Customs to determine that they do not violate these prohibitions.

Foreign visitors and residents in China have sometimes been detained and heavily fined for having improper sexual relations with Chinese citizens. In most of these cases, the foreigners involved had invited Chinese citizens to their hotel rooms. Any U.S. citizen who is detained by Chinese authorities for questioning regarding this or any other violation of Chinese law or regulations should notify the U.S. Embassy or nearest U.S. consulate as soon as possible.

Criminal penalties for possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs in China are strict. Convicted offenders may receive severe jail sentences and fines.

**Consular Access**

Under the U.S. P.R.C. Consular Convention of 1980, U.S. consular officers shall be notified if a U.S. citizen is arrested or detained no later than four days after the arrest or detention.

Under the Convention, U.S. consular officers must be informed upon request of the reasons for the arrest or detention and have a right to visit the citizen after a formal request is made by the consular officer. U.S. consular officers cannot serve as attorneys or give legal advice. They can, however, provide a list of local English speaking attorneys you may retain and help you find legal representation.

You are encouraged to carry photocopies of your passport data and photo pages with you at all times so that, if questioned by PRC officials, proof of U.S. citizenship is readily available. (Do not carry your original passport around with you. Your passport and other valuables should be placed in a hotel safety deposit box.)

U.S. citizens have rights to consular access under the U.S. PRC Consular Convention and should insist upon contact with the U.S. Embassy or one of the U.S. consulates general. If you are denied this right, continue to protest.

**Dual Nationality**

China does not recognize dual nationality. If you are a citizen of both China and the U.S., you may experience difficulty entering and departing China on your U.S. passports. In some cases, U.S. passports have been seized by Chinese authorities. Dual nationals may be subject to Chinese laws which impose special obligations. Such persons are often required to use Chinese documentation to enter China.

The United States requires that all U.S. citizens enter and depart the United States on U.S. passports. Dual nationals who enter and depart China using a U.S. passport and a valid PRC visa retain the right of U.S. consular access and protection under the U.S.PRC Consular Convention. The ability of the U.S. Embassy or consulates general to provide normal consular services would be extremely limited should a dual national enter China on a Chinese or other passport.

China does not recognize the U.S. citizenship of children born in China, when one of the parents is a PRC national. Such children are required to depart China on PRC travel documents. Children born in the United States to PRC national parents, who are neither lawful permanent residents nor U.S. citizens, are not recognized as U.S. citizens under Chinese nationality law. Although Chinese consulates have frequently issued visas to such individuals in error, they are treated
solely as PRC nationals by Chinese authorities when in China.

Before traveling to China, dual nationals should contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at (202) 647-6769 or the U.S. Embassy in Beijing (see address at end of this booklet) for additional information.

**Passport Confiscation and Business Disputes**

If you are planning to conduct business in China, please be vigilant in investigating the companies you plan to work with to ensure they are reputable or to learn whether a prior history of disputes exists.

The confiscation of foreign passports of persons involved in business disputes has increased in China in recent years, frequently resulting in individuals being placed under house arrest or being unable to leave China until the dispute is satisfactorily resolved. As a valid Chinese visa is required in order to depart China, obtaining a replacement for a confiscated U.S. passport will not facilitate exiting the PRC and the Chinese government will block your departure.

**Family Issues**

**Adoptions**

After completing lengthy pre-adoption procedures in the United States, Americans wishing to adopt a child in China can expect to spend at least two weeks there to complete the adoption.

Once in China, and after the adoption has been completed, the U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou will process the immigrant visa to enable you to bring your newly adopted child back to the United States.

The “Child Citizenship Act of 2000” became effective on February 27, 2001. This law greatly streamlines the process by which foreign-born children (including adopted children) of U.S. citizen parents can become U.S. citizens when they did not acquire citizenship at birth.

The Child Citizenship Act, which applies to both adopted and biological children of U.S. citizens, amends Section 320 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (“INA”) to provide for the automatic acquisition of U.S. citizenship when certain conditions have been met. Specifically, these conditions are:

- One parent is a U.S. citizen by birth or through naturalization;
- The child is under the age of 18;
- The child is residing in the United States as a lawful permanent resident alien and is in the legal and physical custody of the U.S. citizen parent; and
- If the child is adopted, the adoption must be final.

Under the previous law, internationally adopted children of a U.S. citizen did not automatically become citizens upon their admission into the United States as immigrants.

**Abductions**

In an effort to prevent international child abduction, many governments have initiated procedures at entry/exit points. These often include requiring documentary evidence of the relationship between the child and an accompanying adult and, when the child’s parent(s) or legal guardian is not traveling with the child, permission from that adult for the child’s travel. By having such documentation on hand, even if not required, you may facilitate your entry and departure.

You can find current information on adoptions, international parental child abductions, and international child support enforcement issues can be obtained by calling the U.S. Department of State’s Office of Children’s Issues at (202) 736-7000, or by visiting the Consular Affairs Internet site at children’s_issues.html.

**Health**

Tourist travel in China can be extremely strenuous and may be especially debilitating to someone in poor health. Tours often involve walking long distances and up steep hills. All, especially those with a history of coronary/pulmonary
problems, should have a complete medical checkup before making final travel plans. It is very important to schedule rest periods during your touring activities.

China discourages travel by persons who are ill, pregnant, or are of advanced age. Visa applicants over 60 are sometimes required to complete a health questionnaire. If medical problems exist, a letter from your physician in the United States explaining treatment and, if relevant, copies of your most recent electrocardiograms, would be helpful in case a medical emergency occurs in China.

China lacks handicapped-accessible facilities. Even travel to popular destinations such as the Great Wall and the Forbidden City can present problems to persons with disabilities. If you require such facilities, you may want to discuss this with your travel agent or host well in advance of your proposed travel.

Air pollution in the large cities is severe, particularly in winter, and respiratory ailments are common.

Be aware that HIV has become a significant concern in China. You should always ask doctors and dentists to use sterilized equipment and be prepared to pay for new syringe needles in hospitals or clinics.

Do not drink tap water in China. Hotels almost always supply boiled water that is safe to drink. Buy bottled water and/or carbonated drinks. Make sure you carry water purification tablets to use when neither boiled water nor bottled drinks are available.

If you are planning to rent an apartment with gas appliances while in China, be aware that in some areas natural gas is not scented to warn occupants of gas leaks or concentrations. Also, heaters may not always be well vented, thereby allowing excess carbon monoxide to build up in living spaces.

There have been fatal accidents involving American citizens, so make sure all gas appliances are properly vented or install gas and carbon monoxide detectors in your residence. These devices are not widely available in China, and they should be purchased prior to arrival.

You can obtain information on vaccinations and other health precautions for travelers in the United States from local health departments, private doctors, travel clinics, and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or via the CDC’s Internet site at http://www.cdc.gov.

**Medical Facilities**

You can select hospitals in major Chinese cities that have so-called VIP wards (gaogan bingfang). These wards feature reasonably up-to-date medical technology and physicians who are both knowledgeable and skilled. Most of these VIP wards also provide medical services to foreigners, feature English-speaking doctors and nurses, and may even accept credit cards for payment.

Even in the VIP/Foreigner wards of major hospitals, however, American patients have frequently encountered difficulty due to cultural and regulatory differences. Physicians and hospitals have sometimes refused to supply American patients with complete copies of their Chinese hospital medical records, including laboratory test results, scans, and x-rays. Physicians have also frequently discouraged Americans from obtaining second opinions from outside physicians. Hospitals have sometimes been reluctant to release patients for medical evacuation in cases where they would prefer to keep the patient for an extended stay.

Ambulances do not carry sophisticated medical equipment, and ambulance personnel generally have little or no medical training. Therefore, injured or seriously ill Americans should take taxis or other immediately available vehicles to the nearest major hospital rather than waiting for ambulances to arrive.

In rural areas, only rudimentary medical facilities are generally available. Medical personnel in rural areas are often poorly trained and are often reluctant to accept responsibility for treating foreigners, even in emergency situations.
Foreign-operated medical providers catering to expatriates and visitors are available, though their services are usually considerably more expensive than hospitals and clinics operated by local government health authorities.

SOS International, Ltd., operates clinics and provides medical evacuation and medical escort services in several Chinese cities. For medical emergencies anywhere in mainland China, Americans can call the SOS International, Ltd., 24-hour “Alarm Center” in Beijing at (86-10) 64629100 or in Shanghai at (86-21) 62950099 for advice and referrals to local facilities. SOS International Alarm Centers can also be contacted in Hong Kong at (852) 24289900 and in the United States at (1-800) 523-6586.

The Australian firm, GlobalDoctor, Ltd., has opened clinics staffed by English-speaking doctors within the VIP wards of government-run hospitals in Chengdu, Nanjing, and Beijing and plans to open additional facilities within several months in Xian and Shenzhen. GlobalDoctor can be reached by telephone from China at (61-8) 92263088 or on the Internet at www.eglobaldoctor.com.

Additional information on medical providers specializing in treating foreigners, including dental and orthodontic clinics, is available on the U.S. Embassies web page at www.usembassy-china.org.cn.

**Medical Insurance**

Americans are advised to travel to China with both health insurance and medical evacuation insurance (often included in so-called “travel” insurance and provided as part of a tour group package).

U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. Even when insurance does cover services received in China, it will usually be necessary to pay first and then file for reimbursement with the insurance company upon returning to the United States.

Supplemental insurance with specific overseas coverage, including provision for medical evacuation, is strongly recommended and can be purchased in the United States prior to travel.

Some insurance policies also include coverage for psychiatric treatment and for disposition of remains in the event of death.

Recent medical evacuations by air ambulance from China to nearby areas have cost over US $50,000. Most standard U.S. medical insurance policies do not cover the cost of such medical evacuations.

Two private emergency medical assistance firms, SOS International, Ltd., and Medex Assistance Corporation, offer medical insurance policies designed for travelers and also have staff in China who can assist in the event of a medical emergency.

**Disclaimer:** The U.S. Department of State provides this information as a service to U.S. citizens but cannot specifically recommend any medical assistance firm or guarantee the quality of services offered by private companies.

SOS International, Ltd. (formerly known in some areas as Asia Emergency Assistance)

Beijing Clinic address: Building C, BITIC Leasing Center, No. 1 North Road, Xingfu Sancun, Sanlitun, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100600.

Beijing SOS International Clinic, telephone: (86-10) 6462-9112, Fax (86-10) 6462-9111.

For medical emergencies, call the SOS International Alarm Center at (86-10) 6462-9100 from anywhere in Mainland China. If you are calling from Hong Kong, dial (852) 2428-9900. If you are calling from the U.S., dial 1-800-468-5232. Their phone lines are answered 24 hours by SOS International Alarm Center personnel.

For information on purchasing health or travel insurance from SOS International, please call in the U.S. at 1-800-523-6586 or visit their web site at www.intsos.com.

SOS International has correspondent arrangements with hospitals in several Chinese cities. Persons in China should first call the Alarm Center in Beijing at (86-10) 6462-9100.
MEDEX Assistance Corporation, Regus Office 19, Beijing Lufthansa Center, No. 50 Liangmaqiao Road, Chaoyang District Beijing 100016. You can visit their web site at www.medexassist.com.

MEDEX U.S. telephone: (1-800) 537-2029 or (1-410) 453-6300 (24 hours). Beijing Office Fax: (86-10) 6465-1240 or (86-10) 6465-1269. Email: medexasst@aol.com (Baltimore, Maryland).

Medex members calling with a medical emergency call: (1-800) 527-0218 or (1-410) 453-6330. Medex members in China, who are calling with a medical emergency should call Medex-Emergency at (86-10) 6465-1264.

More useful information on medical emergencies abroad, including overseas insurance programs, is provided in the Department of State’s, Bureau of Consular Affairs brochure, Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad, available via the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page at http://travel.state.gov, or autofax: 1-202 647-3000.

Travel Arrangements Within China

Package tours, while often more expensive than self arranged travel, will insulate you from the difficulties of booking travel by air, rail, bus or car in China. Transportation systems have not expanded as fast as the number of Chinese and international travelers has increased. Planes and trains are often overbooked.

Tickets or reservations for onward travel should be reconfirmed at each stop. Hotels, for a fee, will assist in making reservations and purchasing tickets.

Train travel can be difficult to reserve, even for the experienced traveler. Round trip rail tickets are not generally available without the services of a travel agency. Beware of counterfeit train tickets. Unethical entrepreneurs manufacture and sell such tickets at railway stations.

Areas of Interest

Modern tourist facilities are available in major cities in China. China is full of natural and man-made wonders. Its great rivers include the Yellow and the Yangtze.

Hong Kong SAR is cosmopolitan and highly developed, and a popular destination.

Macau SAR has well developed tourism facilities. Gambling and tourism are some of the major factors in Macau’s economy.

There are also many mountain ranges including the Himalayas along the southern border of Tibet and the Kunlun Mountains stretching east and west along Tibet’s northern edge. Part of the Gobi desert is located in China’s Inner Mongolia.

China’s most popular man-made wonder is the Great Wall. The Great Wall was built in the 3rd century B.C. (completed in 204 B.C.). It extends for about 1500 miles from Gansu province to the Bohai Gulf. The wall averages 20 to 50 feet high and 15 to 25 feet thick. The actual length, including branches and windings, is more than 2000 miles.

Additional Information

Hong Kong

Hong Kong, a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People’s Republic of China, enjoys a high degree of autonomy, except in the areas of defense and foreign policy, and retains its own currency, laws, and border controls. It is composed of three geographic areas: the New Territories, Kowloon Peninsula, and Hong Kong Island.

Entry/Exit Requirements

A passport and evidence of onward/return transportation by sea/air are required. A visa is not required for tourist visits by U.S. citizens of up to 90 days. An extension of stay may be granted upon application to the Hong Kong SAR Immigration Department. U.S. citizens must have passports with at least four months’ validity for entry into Hong Kong.

A departure tax of 80 Hong Kong dollars (approximately $10.30 U.S. dollars), unless included in the airfare, must be paid at the airport. Visas are required to work or study. Public transportation from Hong Kong’s International Airport at Chek
Lap Kok to Central Hong Kong (about 25 miles) is readily available, as are taxis. Travelers should exchange sufficient money for transportation at the airport exchange facility located immediately outside the baggage claim area.

For the most current information concerning entry and exit requirements, travelers can consult the Hong Kong SAR Immigration Department, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong, Tel. (852) 2829-3001, fax (852) 2824-1133, Internet home page: www.info.gov.hk/immd/, or the Embassy of the People's Republic of China. (See Embassy's address on page 11.)

Macau
Macau, a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China, enjoys a high degree of autonomy, except in the areas of defense and foreign policy, and retains its own currency, laws, and border controls. Macau's revenue from tourism exceeds exports. Macau, population 437,000, covers a thirteen-square-mile area on the mainland of China bordering the South China Sea and the small, adjacent islands of Taipa and Coloane.

Entry/Exit Requirements
Passports are required. A visa is not required for tourist visits of up to 30 days. For further information on entry requirements, please consult the Macau Tourist Information Bureau's U.S. Representative Office (operated as Integrated Travel Resources Inc.) at 5757 West Century Boulevard, Suite 660, Los Angeles, CA 90045-6407, Tel: (310) 568-0009 or Fax: (310) 338-0708. You can also check the Macau Government home page at www.macau.gov.mo, or contact the Embassy of China. (The Embassy's address is at the end of the booklet).

The pataca (US $1.00 to approximately 7.80 patacas) is the official currency in Macau. Included in the cost of ferry tickets from Macau to Hong Kong is a departure tax of 20 patacas. The airport departure tax for flights from Macau to China is 80 patacas, and 130 patacas for flights to other destinations.

Tibet
Virtually all of the Tibetan autonomous region, much of Qinghai and Xinjiang, and parts of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Gansu are above 13,000 feet (4,000 meters) in altitude. Some main roads in Tibet, Qinghai, and Xinjiang go above 17,000 feet (5,200 meters), where available oxygen is only half of that at sea level.

Conditions in Tibet are primitive, and travel there can be particularly arduous. Medical facilities are practically nonexistent. Many otherwise healthy visitors to the high altitude areas may suffer severe headaches, nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath, or a dry cough. These symptoms usually disappear after a few days of acclimatization.

However, if symptoms persist, sufferers should descend to a lower altitude, or seek medical assistance as soon as possible. Visitors with respiratory or cardiac problems should avoid such high altitudes. Consult a physician before making the trip.

Entry/Exit Requirements
Permits are required to visit Tibet as well as many remote areas not normally open to foreigners. Travel arrangements to Tibet can be made from outside of China, but once in China, travelers wishing to visit Tibet must join a group, which can be arranged by almost any Chinese travel agency. The travel agency will arrange for the necessary permits and collect any fees.

The Chinese Government requires foreigners (including U.S. citizens) wishing to visit Tibet to apply in advance for approval from the Tourist Administration of the Tibetan Autonomous Region. More information is available from the Chinese Embassy or one of the Chinese consulates in the United States (See the Chinese Embassy and consulates addresses listed at the end of this pamphlet), or, while in China, from the U.S. Embassy or nearest U.S. Consulate General. (The U.S. Embassy and consulates addresses are listed at the end of this pamphlet.) Recently, some Americans with long-term Chinese visas have experienced difficulty obtaining permits to visit Tibet.
Trans-Siberian Express
If you wish to take the Trans-Siberian railway from Beijing to Europe, you must obtain visas for Mongolia, Russia and other countries en route. Plan ahead. The Mongolian Consulate in Beijing is only open a few hours per week.

Restricted Areas
Visitors to China should be aware that Chinese regulations strictly prohibit travel in "closed" areas without special permission. However, over 1,200 cities and areas in China are open to visitors without special travel permits, including most major scenic and historical sites. If you need to know if an area is open to travel without a permit, seek advice from the nearest Chinese embassy or consulate, or, if you are already in China, from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, the nearest U.S. consulate, or the local Chinese public security bureau. (The U.S. Embassy and consulates addresses are listed on pages 12 and 13)

Chinese Embassy and Consulates in the United States
www.china-embassy.org

Embassy of the People’s Republic of China
2300 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008
(202) 328-2517

Visa Section of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China
2201 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20007
(202) 338-6688

Chinese Consulate General
100 West Erie Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610
(312) 803-0095

Chinese Consulate General
3400 Montrose Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77006
(713) 524-4311

Chinese Consulate General
443 Shatto Place, Suite 300
Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 807-8006

Chinese Consulate General
520 12th Avenue
New York, New York 10036
(212) 868-2078

Chinese Consulate General
1450 Laguna Street
San Francisco, California 94115
(415) 674-2940
The Embassy consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Qinghai, Xinjiang, Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, and Jiangxi.

U.S. Consulate General
Number 4 Lingshiguan Road
Section 4, Renmin Nanlu,
Chengdu 610041
Tel: (86-28) 558-3992, 555-3119
After-hours (86-0) 13708001422.
Fax: (86-28) 558-3520

This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Guizhou, Sichuan, Xizang (Tibet), and Yunnan, as well as the municipality of Chongqing.

U.S. Consulate General
Number 1 South Shamian Street
Shamian Island 200S1
Guangzhou 510133
Tel: (86-20) 8121-8000 or (86-20) 8121-8418 After-hours: (86-0) 13902203169
Fax: (86-20) 8121-8428

This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, and Fujian.

U.S. Consulate General
1469 Huaihai Zhonglu
Shanghai 200031
telephone: (86-21) 6433-6880
after-hours: (86-21) 6433-3936
fax: (86-21) 6433-4122, 6471-1148

This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Shanghai, Anhui, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang.

U.S. Consulate General
No. 52, 14th Wei Road
Heping District
Shenyang 110003
This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Liaoning, Heilongjiang, and Jilin.

**U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong**

[http://hongkong.usconsulate.gov](http://hongkong.usconsulate.gov)

U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong
26 Garden Road
Central
Hong Kong
telephone: (852) 2523-9011
after-hours: (852) 2523-9011: follow prompts
fax: (852) 2845-4845
Email: acshnk@netvigator.com
This consular district includes Hong Kong and Macau.