



ABOUT CHINA

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The People's Republic of China is a unified, multi-national country comprising of 56 nationalities. The Han people make up 91.02 percent of the total population, leaving 8.98 percent for the other 55 ethnic minorities. According to the law, all nationalities in China are equal. The State protects their lawful rights and interests and promotes equality, unity and mutual help among them.

Chinese family names came into existence 5,000 years ago. There are more than 5,000 family names which 200 to 300 are the most popular. The order of Chinese names is family name first, following by given name. For instance, the family name of a person is Wang. The given name is Dong. His/her full name would be Wang Dong. The most popular Chinese family names are LI, ZHANG, WANG, ZHAO, LIU, CHEN. According to the most recent official statistics, the three most popular family names are LI, WANG and ZHANG, which comprise 7.9% (97 million), 7.4 and 7.1 of total population in China respectively.

China is a multi-religious country. Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism, which the first three being more wide spread. Various religions exert different influences on different ethnic groups. Islam is followed by the Hui, Uygur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Tatar, Dongxiang, Salar and Bonan nationalities; Buddhism and Lamaism are followed by the Tibetan, Mongolian, Dai and Yugur nationalities; Christianity is followed by the Miao, Yao and Yi nationalities; Shamanism is followed by the Oroqen, Ewenki and Daur nationalities; the majority Han nationality believes in Buddhism, Christianity and Taoism.

CHINA BANK & CURRENCY EXCHANGE

Chinese currency is called Renminbi (people's money) which is often abbreviated as RMB. It is issued by the People's Bank of China and the sole legal tender for both Chinese nationals and foreign tourists. The unit of Renminbi is yuan and the smaller, jiao and fen. The conversion rate among the three is: 1 yuan = 10 jiao = 100 fen. Chinese people normally refer to Yuan as Kuai, and Jiao as Mao. RMB is issued both in notes and coins. The denominations for paper notes include 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 yuan; 5, 2 and 1 jiao; and 5, 2 and 1 fen. The denominations for coins are 1 yuan; 5, 2 and 1 jiao; and 5, 2 and 1 fen.

A foreigner can bring cash and change it at the Bank of China for RMB. The exchange rate is always floating, therefore, you will receive the latest exchange rate when you enter into a Bank of China. Credit cards can also be used. At present, the following credit cards are accepted in China: Master Card, Federal Card, Visa, American Express, JCB and Diners Card. Holders can draw cash from the Bank of China and pay for purchases at exchange centers at the Bank of China, appointed shops, hotels and restaurants. However, this applies only in major cities. Credit cards are not always accepted for the purchase of rail and air tickets. ATMs that accept foreign cards are few and far between. Do not rely on them as a way of obtaining cash in Mainland China.

CHINA TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH

Telephone communications within China is good and getting better as the national system upgrades to fiber optic cable. Direct long-distance dials (DDD) and International calls (IDD) can be made from hotel rooms or roadside telephone kiosks. When making a domestic call, visitors should dial the domestic prefix 0 plus area code and the number. When making an international call, just dial the international prefix 00, plus country code, area code and number. International Direct Dial (IDD) telephone service is available from almost any telephone in the major cities, hotels and phone centers in secondary cities. IDD calls have a six-second minimum charge. The rate is 0.80 yuan per six seconds. All long distance phone calls made between 21:00 and 07:00 the next morning only pay half the daytime price.

CHINA POSTAL SERVICE

The postal service is one of the most efficient systems in China. Local rates are inexpensive and international rates are reasonable. Tourist hotels usually have their own post offices and shipping services, but hotel front desks provide the most convenient places for travelers to drop mail. All major international courier services have offices in major Chinese cities, and travelers can arrange with their hotel for pickup.

There are Post Offices in all cities and towns throughout the country. Domestic mail is very fast and the cost is low, normally it is 0.60 yuan for local deliveries and 0.80 yuan for inter-city mail. Within some cities, there is often same-day delivery; between large cities, delivery is usually overnight. The international postal service is also efficient. Under normal circumstances, it will only take 5-10 days for airmail letters or postcards to reach their destinations.

The Chinese postal services also offer Express Mail Service (EMS) to most domestic and international destinations. A number of international courier companies have offices in China, in which express mail service such as DHL, UPS, TNT and FedEx are now accessible to more than 10,000 cities in 170 countries and regions. Post offices, with eye-catching green emblems, are usually found on main streets, at railway stations, airport and major scenic spots. They open daily from 08:00-19:00.

CHINA INTERNET SERVICE

Just as in the rest of the world the Internet is widely available in China. You will be able find access to Internet facilities in most major cities. Business centers in 4 and 5 star hotels provide an Internet service for visitors and cyber cafes are plentiful.

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