

China Travel Insider

Free Sample

2026 Edition

This free sample includes selected chapters from the Complete Guide. It covers visa requirements for 30+ countries, a VPN quick guide, the top 5 essential apps, key culture rules, and survival phrases.

Included in this free sample:	
Visa requirements table (30+ countries)	Chapter 2
VPN quick guide — which VPNs work in China	Chapter 3
Top 5 essential apps you must install	Chapter 4
5 culture rules foreigners often break	Chapter 7
10 survival phrases with pronunciation	Chapter 8

The Complete Guide (\$19.99) includes all 16 chapters: 20 city routes with attraction details, 5 ready-made itineraries, Alipay/WeChat Pay walkthrough, 80+ phrases, 25 culture rules, food guide, hotel picks, emergency contacts, and more.

CHAPTER 2 (EXCERPT)

Visa Requirements by Country

China's visa policies vary significantly by country. Below is a comprehensive table. Always verify with your local Chinese embassy before booking flights, as rules change frequently.

Country	Visa Type	Duration	Cost (USD)	Processing	Notes
United States	Tourist (L)	10yr multi	\$140	4-5 days	Max 60 days each stay
United Kingdom	Tourist (L)	Single/double	\$130	2-4 weeks	Must apply in person
Canada	Tourist (L)	10yr multi	\$140	4-5 days	Max 60 days each stay
Australia	Tourist (L)	Single/double	\$110	2-4 weeks	Apply via CVASC
Japan	Visa-free	15 days	Free	N/A	Since Nov 2023
South Korea	Visa-free*	15 days	Free	N/A	Group tours only
Singapore	Visa-free	15 days	Free	N/A	Since Jul 2024
Malaysia	Visa-free	30 days	Free	N/A	Since Dec 2023
Thailand	Visa-free	30 days	Free	N/A	Since Mar 2024
France	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$130	2-4 weeks	Group tours may be free
Germany	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$130	2-4 weeks	Group tours may be free
Italy	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$130	2-4 weeks	Group tours may be free
Spain	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$130	2-4 weeks	Group tours may be free
Netherlands	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$130	2-4 weeks	Group tours may be free
Switzerland	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$130	2-4 weeks	Group tours may be free
India	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$80	2-4 weeks	Hotel booking proof
Brazil	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$80	2-4 weeks	Apply at embassy
Russia	Visa-free*	15 days	Free	N/A	Registered group tours only
Philippines	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$60	2-4 weeks	Return ticket required
Indonesia	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$60	2-4 weeks	Apply at embassy
Vietnam	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$50	2-4 weeks	Apply at embassy
Mexico	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$80	2-4 weeks	Apply at embassy
New Zealand	Tourist (L)	Single/double	\$110	2-4 weeks	Apply via CVASC
South Africa	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$80	2-4 weeks	Apply at embassy
Saudi Arabia	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$80	2-4 weeks	Apply at embassy
Turkey	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$60	2-4 weeks	Apply at embassy
Ukraine	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$60	2-4 weeks	Apply at embassy
Argentina	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$80	2-4 weeks	Apply at embassy
Colombia	Tourist (L)	Single entry	\$60	2-4 weeks	Apply at embassy

Key updates for 2026: China has expanded visa-free entry for citizens of Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and several European nations (for organized group tours). Check your embassy website for the latest.

General Visa Application Tips

- Apply at least 4 weeks before your planned travel date

- You need: valid passport (6+ months), visa application form, passport photo, flight/hotel bookings
- Some countries require in-person application at the Chinese embassy/consulate
- China uses a Visa Application Center (CVASC) in some countries - check which one serves your area
- Processing times vary: 4-5 business days for US/Canada, 2-4 weeks for most other countries
- Express processing is available at some centers for an additional fee
- Your first China visa application may require an in-person interview

CHAPTER 3 (EXCERPT)

VPN Quick Guide: Stay Connected in China

China blocks Google, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Gmail, and many other Western services. This is called the "Great Firewall." Without a VPN, you will be digitally stranded.

Which VPNs Actually Work in 2026?

VPN	Reliability	Speed	Price/mo	Best for
Astrill VPN	Very High	Fast	\$10-30	Best overall, most reliable
ExpressVPN	High	Medium	\$6-13	Easy to use, good apps
LetsVPN	High	Fast	\$5-8	Budget option, mobile-first
NordVPN	Medium	Medium	\$3-12	Good value, sometimes blocked
Mullvad	Medium	Fast	\$5.50	Privacy-focused, manual setup

Critical VPN Tips

- **INSTALL YOUR VPN BEFORE YOU LAND IN CHINA.** Once inside China, VPN websites are blocked and App Store/Google Play may not let you download them.
- Download the app on **ALL** your devices (phone, tablet, laptop) before departure.
- Test your VPN at the airport before flying. If it doesn't connect, try a different server location.
- China actively blocks VPNs. Even the best VPNs have occasional downtime. Have a backup VPN installed.
- Free VPNs almost never work in China. Budget \$5-15/month for a reliable paid service.
- Some VPNs offer **obfuscation mode** ("stealth mode") specifically for China. Enable it.

The Complete Guide includes a full internet survival guide: SIM card options, eSIM recommendations, WiFi availability, offline map setup, and step-by-step VPN installation screenshots.

Top 5 Apps You Must Install Before Landing

China runs on apps. Without these 5, basic tasks become nearly impossible. The Complete Guide covers 12 essential apps with full setup instructions.

1. Alipay

Purpose: Mobile payment — pay at 90% of merchants

Without Alipay or WeChat Pay, you cannot pay at most restaurants, shops, or transport. Cash is rarely accepted. The good news: Alipay now supports foreign credit cards (Visa, Mastercard). Download before you arrive and link your card.

In the Complete Guide: Step-by-step walkthrough with screenshots for linking your foreign card.

2. WeChat

Purpose: Everything app — messaging, payment, mini-programs

WeChat is China's WhatsApp + Facebook + PayPal combined. You will use it to communicate with hotels, restaurants, and new friends. WeChat Pay is the other major payment method alongside Alipay.

In the Complete Guide: How to set up WeChat Pay with a foreign card and verify your account.

3. DiDi

Purpose: Ride-hailing — China's Uber

DiDi is the dominant ride-hailing app. It has an English interface and accepts foreign credit cards via Alipay. Taxis are hard to hail on the street and drivers rarely speak English. DiDi solves this.

In the Complete Guide: How to set your destination in English, estimate fares, and use the English interface.

4. Apple Maps / Baidu Maps

Purpose: Navigation — Google Maps is unreliable in China

Google Maps works in China but location data is often shifted by 50-500 meters, making it useless for walking navigation. Apple Maps (on iPhone) works well. For Android, use Baidu Maps or Amap (Gaode) with translation.

In the Complete Guide: Offline map setup and how to navigate without reading Chinese.

5. Trip.com

Purpose: Travel booking — trains, flights, hotels, attraction tickets

Trip.com (formerly Ctrip) is the best English-language booking platform for China. Book high-speed train tickets, domestic flights, hotels, and attraction tickets (many attractions require advance booking). Foreign credit cards accepted.

In the Complete Guide: How to book train tickets, which attractions need advance booking, and seat selection tips.

The Complete Guide covers 7 more essential apps: translation apps, food delivery, metro navigation, shared bikes, and more — all with setup instructions.

5 Culture Rules Foreigners Often Break

These are the top 5 etiquette mistakes foreigners make in China. The Complete Guide covers 25 culture rules and taboos in detail.

1. Do NOT tip. Ever.

Tipping is not part of Chinese culture. In fact, leaving a tip can cause confusion or even offense — the server may chase you down thinking you forgot your change. Exceptions: high-end international hotels and tour guides serving foreign groups may expect tips, but this is always stated upfront.

2. Accept business cards with BOTH hands

When someone gives you a business card (or you give one), use both hands to receive and present it. Take a moment to read it before putting it away. Shoving it into your pocket without looking is considered disrespectful. This applies to any formal interaction.

3. Never stick your chopsticks upright in rice

Sticking chopsticks vertically into a bowl of rice resembles incense sticks burned at funerals for the dead. It is considered very bad luck and deeply offensive. Always lay chopsticks flat across the bowl or on a chopstick rest.

4. Don't point with your index finger

Pointing at people with your index finger is considered rude. Use your whole hand (palm open, fingers together) to gesture toward someone or something. This is especially important when giving directions or calling a server.

5. Never discuss sensitive political topics

Avoid discussions about Taiwan, Tibet, Tiananmen Square, Hong Kong protests, or criticism of the Chinese government. These topics are highly sensitive and can make locals extremely uncomfortable. If someone brings up politics, politely steer the conversation elsewhere.

The Complete Guide includes 20 more culture rules covering: dining etiquette, gift-giving, squat toilet usage, public behavior, photography rules, temple visits, and more.

CHAPTER 8 (EXCERPT)

10 Survival Phrases You Must Know

Even a few words of Mandarin will transform your experience. Locals appreciate the effort, and it opens doors that English alone cannot. The Complete Guide includes 80+ phrases with full pinyin and pronunciation guides.

English	Chinese	Pinyin	Pronunciation
Hello	■ ■	Ni hao	nee how
Thank you	■ ■	Xie xie	shyeh shyeh
Excuse me / Sorry	■ ■ ■ ■	Bu hao yi si	boo how ee suh
Where is the bathroom?	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ?	Xi shou jian zai nar?	shee show jian zai nar?
How much is this?	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ?	Zhe ge duo shao qian?	juh guh dwuh show chyen?
I don't understand	■ ■ ■ ■	Wo bu ming bai	wuh boo ming bay
Do you have...?	■ ... ■ ?	You...ma?	yo...mah?
The bill, please	■ ■	Mai dan	my dahn
Where is...?	... ■ ■ ■ ?	...zai nar?	...zai nar?
Too expensive! Can you lower the price?	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ?	Tai gui le! Neng bu neng bian yian?	tyeh wai yan! nung boo nung byen ee dyen?

Pronunciation Tips

- Tones matter! Mandarin has 4 tones. "ma" can mean mother, hemp, horse, or scold depending on tone. Don't worry too much — context usually saves you.
- When in doubt, show the Chinese characters on your phone screen. This works better than pronunciation.
- Download a translation app (Google Translate with offline Chinese pack, or Baidu Translate) as backup.

The Complete Guide includes 80+ phrases organized by situation: at the restaurant, at the hotel, shopping, transportation, emergencies, doctor visits, and more. Each phrase includes Chinese characters, pinyin, and easy pronunciation.

Ready for the complete guide?

You have seen a sample of what the Complete Guide offers. The full guide includes everything you need for a smooth, confident trip to China:

What the Complete Guide adds:	
Full VPN & internet guide with screenshots	Ch. 3
All 12 essential apps with setup walkthroughs	Ch. 4
Alipay & WeChat Pay step-by-step setup	Ch. 5
Transportation: trains, flights, metro, taxis	Ch. 6
25 culture rules & taboos	Ch. 7
80+ survival phrases with pronunciation	Ch. 8
20 city routes with attraction info tables	Ch. 9
Food & restaurant guide	Ch. 10
Hotel recommendations by budget	Ch. 11
Emergency contacts & scam avoidance	Ch. 12
Currency exchange & tipping guide	Ch. 13
Seasonal & weather guide	Ch. 14
5 ready-made itineraries (8-14 days)	Ch. 15
Month-by-month destination guide	Ch. 16

Complete Guide: \$19.99

Instant PDF download after PayPal payment.

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