



China Information

Travel documents

All visitors to China must have a passport that is valid for at least six months after their expected return date. U.S. citizens will also need an entry visa. A group passport list is also required and must be provided to EF no later than 110 days prior to your departure. If you are traveling to Hong Kong, be sure to check visa requirements as they can differ from the visa requirements of mainland China. Citizens of other countries should contact the appropriate embassy regarding entry requirements. For a list of embassies, please visit embassy.org. For visas, we recommend using visacentral.com/efvisas where EF travelers receive a discount.

Minor travelers are required to submit a completed and notarized Parental Authorization Form to VisaCentral as supporting documentation after submitting their visa application. Please note that the form cannot be notarized earlier than 30 days prior to departure.

All travelers will also be required to present a completed 'Arrival Card' to Customs upon arrival in China. The Arrival Card can be completed electronically prior to departure at gov.cn, but please note that travelers must already have their visa in order to complete the card. Travelers can also fill out a paper card upon arrival, though we recommend doing so electronically prior to departure to facilitate a smoother Customs process.

Vaccinations and health precautions

For the most up-to-date information on vaccinations and other health requirements, we recommend checking cdc.gov or consulting your physician.

Tour Director and bus drivers

You will have a bilingual Tour Director for the duration of your tour. If you are booked on the Hong Kong extension, you'll have two Tour Directors one in mainland China and one in Hong Kong. Your Tour Director in mainland China will transfer you to the airport for your flight to Hong Kong, but will not fly with you. Your Hong Kong Tour Director will meet you outside of baggage claim at the airport holding an EF sign. Bus drivers may change from day to day, so tipping should be considered on a daily basis.

Safety

Always inform your Tour Director if you should need to break away from the group at any point. Store valuables in hotel safe deposit boxes and refrain from carrying large sums of money or wearing valuable jewelry. Please be sure to read EF's *Safety Handbook* before going on tour.

Tipping

It's customary to tip your Tour Director and bus drivers as a token of appreciation. We recommend:

- \$6–8 per person per day for your Tour Director
- \$3 per person per day for your bus driver
- \$2 per person per tour for each local guide

We encourage Group Leaders to collect all tip money from their travelers before departing for tour. To keep tips organized, we recommend using the envelopes from your Departure Kit. For larger groups, feel free to divvy up the money between chaperones. It is preferable for tips to be given in the local currency of your destination, especially for local guides. You can ask your travelers to convert their U.S. dollars before you collect tip money, or you can exchange the money yourself into local currency (either in the U.S. or when you arrive abroad). If you have any questions on tipping, please reach out to your Tour Consultant.

Currency

Chinese currency is the Yuan. For groups participating in an extension to Hong Kong, the currency is the Hong Kong Dollar. Cash is useful in some situations, though it is not widely used. If you plan on bringing a card to withdraw cash from banks or ATM machines throughout tour, you should notify your bank of your travel plans to avoid service interruptions and inquire about charges when withdrawing money abroad.

Although payments with a physical credit card (via swipe, tap, or chip insert) are accepted in many hotels, large shops, and restaurants, electronic payments through apps such as WeChat Pay and Alipay are the most widely used and accepted forms of payment in China, even for small purchases. Travelers can link international credit or debit cards to these apps, making them the most convenient way to pay. Travelers' checks should not be brought on tour. Visit xe.com to learn more about Chinese currency.

Transportation

There may be a number of internal flights included on your tour. Your Tour Director will have your internal flight information and e-ticket receipts, which can also be found on your final itinerary and personal tour page. Travelers are encouraged to pack light and should be mindful of baggage limitations when packing. Bus transfers are planned for shorter day excursions from the cities you will visit on tour. Buses are modern and air-conditioned.

Travelers whose tour includes a train transfer must complete Identity Verification with their passports through 12306.cn no later than 30 days prior to departure. Travelers must upload a photo of their passport page, as well as a photo of them holding their passport. Group Leaders and travelers will be provided with instructions on how to complete the Identity Verification process.

Phones and internet

Buying international phone cards in China is easy, and your Tour Director will be happy to help you find a shop that sells them. If you plan to use your cell phone on tour, contact your wireless provider about the potential fees you may incur while calling, texting, or using data abroad.

Travelers will have access to free Wi-Fi in hotel rooms.

Please be aware that all internet users in China, including visitors, must abide by national media laws and regulations. Certain websites and social media platforms could be blocked or temporarily blacked out.

Accommodations

Hotels are generally large and modern, and include amenities such as air-conditioning and television. Beds in hotels will be smaller and firmer than those in the U.S. Students under the age of 20 will share rooms with two or three other travelers of the same gender. These rooms will have either single or shared double beds (or a combination of the two). Students may share rooms with students in the tour group who are not from their own school. Adults typically share rooms with one other adult of the same gender, and may also room with adults in the tour group who are not from their school. Please note that travelers may not always have rooms next to each other (some may even be on different floors) and that hotels may be located outside of the city center.

The most common power outlets in mainland China are type A and type I with a standard voltage of 220V. The most common in Hong Kong is type G with a standard voltage of 220V.

Please note: While hotels in China have American-style toilets, many tourist attractions will have squat toilets. Travelers are advised to bring travel toilet paper and hand sanitizer.

Local food

Chinese cuisine is complex and regionally varied. At breakfast, you'll find Asian-style noodles and dumplings alongside more Western options like toast, eggs, fruit, or cereal. Lunches are not included, which lets travelers choose from a variety of Eastern and Western fare. Dinners in China include a variety of cold starters along with soup, meat dishes (chicken, pork, beef, or fish), vegetables, and rice or noodles. Our meals are chosen to fit an American palate and do not include overly adventurous foods. Dinners in China are usually served family-style for all to share. It's common for several dishes to be placed the middle of the table, with a bowl of rice or noodles given to each person. Please note that this means the chopsticks you'll use to serve yourself will be the same pair you'll eat with. Options are available for vegetarians or travelers with allergies.

Travelers should not drink tap water in China and should only drink water from pre-sealed containers. Such bottled water is available for purchase everywhere for \$1–2. Travelers should still bring reusable water bottles to take advantage of refilling stations available on the bus. Bottled or purified water will be provided to travelers for all included meals. Travelers should avoid eating any food that is uncooked or may have potentially been washed with unfiltered water (like raw vegetables or fruit).

Luggage

Please limit your one checked bag to 44 lbs and your one carry-on item to 17 lbs, xxas this is the maximum baggage allowance for flights within China. As you pack, please consider both climate and cultural standards. Travelers should bring clothes to cover their shoulders and knees. It is advisable to pack clothing for both warm and cool temperatures due to weather fluctuations in China.

Weather

The climate in China is characterized by the enormous size of the country. The north is temperate, with warm summers (around 77°F) and very cold winters. The south is subtropical, with hot (often humid, wet, and muggy) summers and mild winters. Beijing tends to run a little cooler in the summer months (between 75–85°F) compared to Xi'an (80–90°F) and Shanghai (85–95°F). In Hong Kong, the summer is hot, humid, and overcast with temperatures varying between 57–89°F. Please check weather.com for your destinations and travel periods.