



International Short Term Connection – China

Purpose:

This guide is designed to simplify the tasks associated with international travel to China through and with the South East Asia Prayer Center. There are many questions that come with any international travel and there are even more that arise when entering China. We have found that although there are many questions asked, nearly every group has basically continued to ask the same questions. In this guide we will list those questions most frequently asked along with the answers that must be given.

Focus:



VISA PASSPORT – FOOD – MEDICATION – TRAVEL WEAR – TRAVEL LEADER
EMBASSY – RELIGIOUS BELIEFS – YOU SHOULD KNOW

Visa – Passport: When and where should I apply for my visa? What Type of visa should I apply for?

There are several different ways to obtain a visa into China. There are many companies capable of issuing this document to you. What you will first need in order to receive your visa into China is a standard U.S. Passport. You can apply for a U.S. Passport at any major Post Office, but be sure to have official identification and two Passport photos with you as you go.

The most inexpensive and efficient way of receiving your China Visa is by filing your application more than one month before your departure date however quick returns are possible with visa transfer but can be costly. Same day Visas can be obtained through walk in service. You will need one thirty day, single entry, tourist, visa for your short term trip with SEAPC.

- Applications and instructions for China Visa can be found at:
 - www.china-embassy.org

- The Embassy of China – office of visa services – in Washington D.C. is located in the Visa Office of the Chinese Embassy:

2201 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 110, Washington, DC 20007

Tel: (202) 338-6688
Fax: (202) 588-9760
Email: chnvisa@bellatlantic.net

- Office hours are from 10am – 3pm Monday through Friday

Food- Is it safe to eat the food?

American Chinese cuisine is not exactly the menu you will read while traveling through China. Several dishes are similar, however you are guaranteed to find unique flavors and spices added in every region of China. For example, if you are traveling in southern China, expect much more spice than in the north. If you are traveling in Tibet, expect much less fruit and vegetables. Like in the United States, each region is well known for their differences in food and they do take great pride in your positive response.

The consistent cautions do apply for food and travel. Please refrain from any water that is not bottled and be sure to check the seal of each bottle before you drink. If you are eating at a restaurant, try to avoid uncooked vegetables or fruit that cannot be peeled. Be cautious of MSG if your stomach reacts. With meat, overcooked is much better than undercooked.

The food in China is delicious and opportunity to eat is everywhere. Culturally, it is proper to offer the individuals around you food before you take for yourself. Also, never pick your teeth at the table without covering your mouth with one hand. It is true that belching is not considered rude to the host, but may be found offensive to the other guests around you. The Chinese people love to see your reactions to the foods that they have prepared, so never be shy to tell a host just what was different and enjoyable. Try your best to sample everything but do not force yourself into eating.

Medication- What medications should I bring?

There are quality hospitals, doctors, and pharmacies in China but always have the prescriptions that you need with you at all times. Never forget a small, personal, first aid kit. Band-aids, tweezers, Neosporin, gauze, scissors, and aspirin should suffice.

If you have not had a physical recently, you should schedule an appointment to have one before you leave. If you do have a medical condition, it is imperative that you share it with your team leader before you travel. This way your leader will know exactly how to respond in case of emergency.

China is very famous for its traditional medicines and healthcare. We, in no way, recommend these medicines as supplements for what your doctor prescribes, and ask that you refrain from using them during your trip in China.

Travel Wear- How should I pack for the trip?

It is a good habit to check the current weather patterns and traditional patterns of the region you are traveling in before you depart. Although extreme conditions do happen, this will give you a general idea on how to pack and what to wear while you travel. In the summer months, most of China ranges from 80 degrees to 100 degrees Fahrenheit. These temperatures drop to as low as 20-32 degrees by winter. If you are traveling in the Tibet Autonomous Region of Tibet, China, be prepared for extreme weather changes and always dress in layers.

American styles and materials are common in China and casual wear should suffice in any situation. We do recommend fast wicking clothing and multiple lightweight layers for comfort. Be prepared for rain by packing a lightweight waterproof jacket.

Footwear is probably the most important piece of clothing to consider. A solid double stitch, waterproof, boot is always the best recommendation for travel outside of the cities. If you are traveling with SEAPC, you will be walking, so a good pair of tennis shoes would be best.

Travel Leaders:

It is an absolute necessity to assign a team leader for your team, whether an SEAPC leader is traveling with you, meeting you, directing you, or not. This individual should be able to manage travel details, finances, home contacts, and all of the wonderful disputes that make us stronger as we travel.

SEAPC local staff and hosting parties will make the final decision in any circumstance and should be given the utmost respect for the ongoing project that they serve. These individuals will do anything possible to meet the team needs and assist you, but are not responsible for the team as a whole. It must be noted that their mission continues after our short term team leaves.

Embassy-

There are several US Embassy locations in China. Each major city should have a representative office. Contacting a United States Embassy in China is something done only out of absolute necessity. While the office can be a great help in time of need, it

does serve as a last resort and a final contact. If you have lost your Passport, the Embassy is the place to go for a new copy.

Religious Beliefs-

A communist party that does not maintain one religious belief governs China. This nation has made positive steps in allowing more religious freedoms but is still considered a closed nation for religious practice. The majority of the population in China is Buddhist. Other, smaller, religions such as Taoism, Confucianism, and Ancestral worship are practiced in many regions. Christianity, and Islam are both practiced in China.

It is unlawful to perform certain religious activities in public. This regulation is normally acted upon to break up large crowds and to restrain from riots. Religious persecution may still take place but is acted upon in different fashions from one region to the next. The history of the Christian Church in China is very well documented. We would encourage you to research the cultural and religious history of any region in China before you travel there.

You Should Know - By Matt Geppert

- 1. Accommodations – There are five stars, no stars, and all stars (literally see all the stars) in China. With SEAPC I have stayed in each one. Prices are comparable to the U.S.**
- 2. Geography – The landscape of China changes from one region to the next. It truly is the most geographically diverse nation on earth. It would be a good idea to research just where you are staying in China, and check out what landmarks are around you before you go.**
- 3. Technology – China is very much in tune with the Internet era. Wireless services are available in many of the major cities and Internet cafes can be found around every corner. SIM cards are available at all airports for cell phone use.**
- 4. Language – Many people are learning English in China and will be excited to practice with you. This is a great way to meet young people but be sure to practice your Chinese with them. It is still easy to get lost in China without language skill so be sure to have your hotel location in Chinese and a number to reach you contact with you.**
- 5. Money – Travel within the Country should be handled by cash. For a two-week trip, be sure to have at least \$300 with you and any money needed for internal travel. The average money spent for two weeks in China plus airfare is \$1500 - \$2200. As always, Visa and American Express are accepted in large hotels. ATM's are frequently found throughout cities in China.**



China Travel – short term connection

Thank you for following what God had put in you heart to go to China this summer. We are so blessed by the opportunity give to us and are excited to take this journey together. The plans for this summer are rapidly coming together and there are some questions that need to be answered before we go. Please take a moment and read through the question below. Have your team leader relay this information back to our home office by May 15th, 2006.

DATES: JUNE 19th through JULY 3rd, 2006

TRAVEL: From US to Beijing. 19th-24th. Beijing to Xian. 24th-27th. Xian to Lhasa. 27th through 3rd.

- 1) Please supply our office with the full names of each individual traveling in you group.**
- 2) Who in that group is the team leader?**
- 3) Please supply our office with two visa pictures and a photocopy of your passport by May 15th, 2006.**
- 4) Each visa will cost ~\$100**
- 5) Estimated travel costs for two weeks in China and Tibet plus airfare = ~\$2500**
- 6) If your team needs SEAPC to arrange tickets for you please contact our office before May 15th with exact number of passengers in you group.**