# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTICLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map of Asia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of China</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Overview</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of China</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Beijing</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Beijing Subway</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate in Beijing</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Beijing</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forbidden City</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiananmen Square</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great Wall of China</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Shanghai</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Shanghai Subway</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai Climate</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Shanghai</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Shanghai</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map of China
The People's Republic of China is the world's oldest continuous major civilization, dating back over 3,500 years. It is also the most populous, with 1.26 billion inhabitants. The vast majority of the population lives in the warmer east and southwest. China is bordered by Russia and Mongolia in the north; by North Korea, the Yellow Sea and the South China Sea in the east; by Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, India, Bhutan and Nepal in the south; and by India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in the west.

Executive Summary for China

China is a stable country both politically and economically and is governed by the Communist Party of China. Beginning in the late 1970s the country began to open up economically and allow for aspects of the market economy to be introduced inside the country. That opening led to nearly three decades of rapid economic growth, making China the second largest economy in the world. Despite these changes the party is still the sole source of political power inside the country and continues to play a decisive role in the management of the national economy. While the livelihoods of tens of millions of Chinese citizens have been improved under the combination of single party control and gradual economic liberalization, the system is not without its faults. Environmental degradation, illegal land seizures and corruption are frequently the cause of demonstrations in China and are a cause for concern with regard to the long-term stability of the country. Recent protests in Hong Kong have highlighted the friction between the citizens of that city and the Chinese Communist Party over the issue of democratization.

Crime is a security concern in China. Organized criminal activities, including kidnap-for-ransom, are an issue in areas of southern China. Government surveillance is a major concern for foreign travelers, as is corruption. Political tensions are also a concern, particularly regarding China's international relations with Taiwan, Japan and North Korea. Ethnic and cultural issues surrounding the Tibetan and Uighur communities can also lead to periodic protests and civil unrest in far western China. For the most part these security concerns are unlikely to affect short-term travelers to the country.
China Information

Current Analysis
- China enjoys a stable political environment under the dominance of the communist party.
- The Chinese economy is one of the strongest in the world, and the country has become a crucial part of the world market.
- China's population is a collection of many diverse ethnic groups that have in recent years sought to maintain their cultural identities most notably the Uighur and Tibetan communities of far western China with persistent opposition to the communist regime in Beijing.
- China's ongoing dispute over the status of Taiwan remains a concern, although recent negotiations between the two nations has built closer diplomatic ties.
- AntiJapanese sentiment remains a concern, particularly amid ongoing territorial disputes.

Political
China is a politically stable country. The communist regime has remained in firm control for decades, although the government system itself has evolved over time from a dictatorial style rule under Mao Zedong to a more diverse combination of political, military and corporate authority exhibited today. The current government structure is a complex hierarchy of collective administrative power held by members of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China (PSC). New members of the PSC were chosen at the PSC Congress in November 2012. The congress which marked the largest political transition the past decade went largely as expected, with Vice President Xi Jinping replacing Hu Jintao as president. Xi unexpectedly took over the role as head of the Central Military Commission, a position that has traditionally been retained by the outgoing president for a period of time, meaning that unlike previous leaders Hu ceded all power upon his departure.

A major challenge for Xi emerged in September 2014 when protests began throughout Hong Kong. Democracy advocacy groups organized the protests in opposition to a decision by the Communist Party to not allow the direct nominations of candidates for Hong Kong's chief executive position. The Communist Party has signaled that it will not make major concessions to these protesters even if they remain in the streets for several weeks. Doing so could cause a ripple effect throughout Chinese cities. To prevent awareness of the Hong Kong protests on the mainland, Chinese officials have aggressively censored social media, television and other forms of communication.

In his first years as president, Xi focused on consolidating power particularly with regard to military and economic policy around the office of the president. His administration has also pursued a number of high-profile corruption investigations, including Zhou Yongkang, a former Politburo member in charge of the country's security establishment. However, in 2013 there were no major policy shifts regarding government transparency and oversight and the chance of either issue becoming a focal point in 2014 is quite remote. While Xi is seen as a cautious reformer, most of the members of the PSC are described as conservative. However, their age five of the members are older than 64 means that the next change in leadership could take place at the next PSC Congress in 2017, possibly ushering in more reformist minded leaders from the 25member Politburo, the group below the PSC.

From an international standpoint, China is the world's largest industrial and commercial exporter. The U.S and China are expected to continue fostering economic ties in the coming years as both nations benefit from their economic cooperation. Political policy in China may eventually shift to away from its traditional economic partners as countries like Brazil, India, parts of Africa and Southeast Asia become more important players in the world market.
China-Taiwan Relations

While China officially continues to maintain a policy of demanding reunification with Taiwan, recent political developments have shown that the two longtime rivals are building closer diplomatic ties. In recent years Chinese and Taiwanese diplomats have signed landmark trade agreements to reduce tariffs and cut commercial regulations with the aim of boosting bilateral trade and fostering closer economic cooperation between the two countries. The economic agreements are likely to be a huge benefit in Taiwan, where many manufacturing companies are expected to take advantage of China’s low labor costs and abundant resources.

Despite this increased cooperation, China and Taiwan remain at odds over the issue of reunification. The communist regime in China has in the past issued statements declaring Taiwan to be a breakaway province that needs to eventually reunify politically with the mainland. The Chinese government has recently backed away from making such statements, especially as economic agreements with Taiwan come to fruition. Taiwan also ostensibly considers mainland China to be part of their territory, although current Taiwanese President Ma Yingjeou and his Kuomintang party have turned away from the “One China Principle” and introduced a policy of maintaining commercial links with Beijing. While the territorial issue has sparked hostilities across the Taiwan Strait in the past, the dispute is likely to remain in the diplomatic realm amid ongoing economic cooperation between China and Taiwan.

China-Japan Relations

Anti-Japanese sentiment is a longstanding issue in China, reaching back to the Japanese invasion of China during World War II. Most recently, the dispute over the sovereign status of the Diaoyu Islands (as known in China) has escalated concern. The islands are uninhabited, but are thought to be sitting atop a significant gas deposit, and rights to the islands and surrounding areas also affect fishing and shipping activities. Developments in this territorial dispute have led to protests on the Chinese mainland in which protests against Japanese businesses broke out after Japan bought the islands from their private owner.

A hard line against the adversary is popular domestically in both China and Japan, and the two countries have little incentive in the short term to reduce the diplomatic tensions. Both sides can be expected to use military assets to test the other side and challenge national borders. While the standoff between the two countries is alarming, the chance of direct military confrontation is still quite small in 2014.

Corruption

Corruption is a pervasive element of the government hierarchy in China. Many officials within the CPC have used their authority to demand bribes, extort businesses and arrest competitors. Despite rampant instances of corruption and nepotism in recent years, there are concerns that the Chinese government has neglected ant-corruption enforcement within the CPC. Corruption appears to be especially prevalent in the banking sector, where bank officials often expect large kickbacks in return for loans. The levels of corruption have fueled public discontent and social unrest among ordinary citizens because of the inherent difficulties for those without connections to the highest levels of power. Many high-ranking officials have been arrested and even executed for corruption. Police officers with modest state salaries are easily bribed by criminals and local officials may work in collusion with organized crime gangs. Corrupt law enforcement agents and officials both protect and assist organized criminal groups. In the past, a 10,000-officer-strong special supervisory unit established to monitor and discipline police officers has identified hundreds of thousands of police officers in mainland China for various offenses. Corruption in China is of particular concern to foreign companies because of increased costs, liabilities, and diminished efficiency. Unconfirmed reports indicate that many international firms tacitly comply with the persistent corruption for fear of being blocked out of lucrative contracts and concessions in the Chinese market. Networking through personal contacts is widely regarded as the most effective way for a company to begin conducting business in China. This practice is advantageous for corrupt officials who stand to garner financial gain through their close relationships with business leaders.
Economic Outlook

China has the second largest economy in the world, and the country is expected to steadily overtake the U.S. economy as the largest in the world within the next two decades. China’s economy is for the most part driven by exports abroad, and it expanded by 7.7 percent in 2013 according to China’s official statistics, which is the lowest annual growth rate since 1999.

Part of China’s recent weak growth has to do with a domestic debt crisis. China initially began lending to domestic companies in an aggressive manner in the years immediately following the global recession in order to maintain economic growth. Most of the investment was focused on new infrastructure, in particular commercial real estate. Lending to new state owned companies, which were for the most part set up by local governments, acquired approximately US$3 trillion in debt obligations by mid-2013, which is 70 percent more than in 2010. Total corporate debt in China is expected to reach US$13 trillion in 2014, which is roughly the same size as its total GDP in terms of purchasing power. Numerous Chinese leaders, including Premier Li Keqiang, have openly spoken about the need to reign in corporate lending habits particularly at the provincial and local levels and redirect some of that funding toward smarter investments. However, the process of unwinding these stimulus efforts could destabilize the banking industry. The difficulty in implementing such a substantial policy change underscores the problems China faces in 2014 as it tries to balance the need for reform with the desire for economic and political continuity.

Doing Business

Handshaking is the accepted greeting in business relations. Chinese usually shake hands very lightly, instead of firmly and forcefully, for as long as 10 seconds. Upon meeting someone, Chinese lower their eyes slightly as a sign of respect. Staring into the eyes of a Chinese makes them uncomfortable.

Prepare presentations for different levels of Chinese business organizations. Recommend an interpreter to help understand nuances. Bring extra copies of proposals; photocopying facilities are scarce.

In China, a person's face is also their company's face. Your relationship with one individual represents your relationship with the entire company. Saying or doing anything that causes someone to lose face can instantly destroy your business opportunity. Causing embarrassment or loss of composure, even unintentionally, will have a negative impact on business negotiations.

Gifts are important, expressing friendship and symbolizing hope for success. Expensive gifts, however, may cause personal embarrassment and political or social awkwardness. For wrapped gifts, gold or red are appropriate colors. White and black are colors of mourning.

Women conducting business in China should act and dress in a formal manner. Conservative suits or dresses are recommended; a blouse or other top should have a high neckline. Subdued, neutral colors such as beige and brown are always appropriate. Flat shoes or very low heels are customary. High heels are acceptable only at a formal reception hosted by a foreign diplomat. Businessmen should wear conservative suits and ties in subdued colors. Bright colors of any kind are considered inappropriate. Wear suits and ties to formal events; tuxedos are not a part of Chinese business culture.

Meetings in Beijing never begin with a discussion of business. Typically, meetings begin with polite, general conversation, often over tea. The host may signal the end of a meeting by offering more tea. The correct response is to decline the offer and say that you are ready to leave. Chinese rarely conduct late business dinners; most will end before 2100.

Ensure that any publicity materials are general. It is best to use white paper, as various colors have traditional meanings in Chinese culture.

Never exaggerate your abilities. The Chinese believe humility is a virtue, and they are likely to investigate your claims. Show little emotion, and do not talk about deadlines.
Persons doing business in China should have double-sided business cards printed in English on one side and Mandarin Chinese on the other. Business cards should be exchanged using both hands to give and receive them. Do not write notes on them.

Infrastructure

All major credit cards are accepted in China, and ATMs are available in all cities. Increasingly Western-style accommodations and meals are moderate to expensive, particularly in China's ultra-modern coastal cities like Shanghai and Hong Kong. International communications capabilities are supported by an efficient phone system and postal service. Taxis are readily available and largely trustworthy, and Beijing maintains an extensive subway system. Vehicles drive on the left.

Currency

The currency in mainland China is the Renminbi. The primary unit for the Renminbi is the Yuan. One Yuan is divided into 10 jiao, which is further subdivided into 10 fen. Money is issued in notes of 1, 2, 5, 10, 50 and 100 Yuan. There are no coins. Foreign currency and traveler's checks can be converted at hotels. ATMs are widely available in malls and on main streets. These machines distribute payment in Chinese currency only. Major credit cards are accepted at most mid-range to top-end hotels and some department stores, although most transactions in China require cash. Businesses that accept credit cards will have credit card signs in plain view. Credit cards cannot be used to purchase transportation services, such as airline tickets. Visitors should be extra cautious when using their credit and debit cards due to the high incidence of credit card fraud.

Official Languages

Mandarin Chinese is spoken by about 70 percent of the population. Cantonese, which differs considerably from Mandarin, is used predominantly in central and western Guangdong, Hong Kong and in southern regions. Other languages include dialects from Fukien, Xiamen and Hakka regions. Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang are autonomous regions with their own languages. English is not commonly spoken in China. Hotel staff in major cities may speak some English, but fluency will vary. Interpreters are usually available for business and government meetings. In outlying and rural areas it is difficult to find anyone who speaks or understands English.

Cultural Diversity

China is a vast and culturally diverse country. While the general conventions of the dominant Han ethnic group have come to define how foreigners view Chinese culture from abroad, there are many ethnically and geographically diverse minority groups throughout the country. For example, travelers are likely to encounter distinctly different cultural aspects such as language and customs between the traditional Cantonese environment of Guangzhou in southeastern China, and the ethnically and religiously dissimilar Uyghur culture in the Muslim majority region of Xinjiang in far western China. In recent years the communist regime has implemented many controversial policies that have sought to establish the Han cultural identity nationwide, and this practice continues to spark tensions with minority communities eager to hold on to their own cultural heritage.

Key Points on Culture in China

- Respect for seniority and elders is a mainstay in China. This means that travelers should greet Chinese persons in order of seniority from highest to lowest.

- The Chinese tend to be formal in their introductions and use the full titles of their guests. A person is either addressed by their full name or by a title and family name. A polite nod or slight bow is used when greeting. A handshake is also acceptable, especially in formal situations.
• Respect and pride are central to Chinese culture; causing embarrassment can seriously destabilize relationships. Chinese culture puts much emphasis on "face," which refers to respect. To "save face" describes the act of trying to get past an embarrassing situation while to "lose face" is to suffer an embarrassment. Public displays of anger and subordinates disagreeing/debating with their superiors in front of others are among some of the situations that can cause serious embarrassment.

• Be conscious about physical gestures and do not use dramatic movements or facial expressions, as these can be considered rude or unsophisticated. If beckoning to someone with a hand gesture, visitors should turn their palm down and wave their fingers toward their body. Use an open hand to point rather than a single finger; never point or beckon with an index finger. It is impolite to put one's hands or fingers in one's mouth, for instance, while using a toothpick.

• Tipping is not a common practice in China, but when offered it is generally given before a service is provided, in hopes of improving service.

• Travelers should not blow their nose and place the handkerchief or tissue in their pocket, as this is considered very rude. Chinese people, however, normally blow their nose using their hand when in public.

• Spitting: in the street, shops, supermarkets, hotel lobbies, hallways, restaurants, on buses and even in hospitals. Traditional Chinese medical thought believes that it is unhealthy to swallow phlegm. Spitting has declined considerably in more developed urban areas like Beijing and Shanghai since the SARS epidemic of 2002. However, in most other areas the habit persists to varying degrees, from moderate to ever-present.

• Smoking: almost anywhere, including areas with "no smoking signs". Few restaurants have no smoking areas although Beijing now forbids smoking in most restaurants. Enforcement can vary but with the exception of Hong Kong, where it most likely will not be enforced. Lower class establishments often do not even have ashtrays. Western restaurants seem to be the only ones who actually enforce the ban so they may be your best bet. Masks would be good idea for long distance bus trips. It is perfectly common for someone to smoke in a lift without asking if they can or even in the hospital!

• Starring: This is common through most of the country. The staring usually originates out of sheer curiosity, almost never out of hostility. Don't be surprised if someone comes right up to you and just looks as if they are watching the TV, no harm done!

• Loud conversations, noise, discussions or public arguments: These are very common. Many mainland Chinese speak very loudly in public (including in the early mornings) and it may be one of the first things you notice upon arrival. Loud speech usually does not mean that the speaker is angry or engaged in an argument (although obviously it can). Full-blown fights involving physical violence are not very common, but they do occur. If you witness such an event, leave the vicinity and do not get involved. Foreigners are almost never targets in China and you will be treated with great respect provided you don't act recklessly. Noise means life, and China is rooted in a community based culture, so you may want to bring earplugs for the long bus or train ride!

• Pushing, shoving and/or jumping queues: This often occurs anywhere where there are queues, (or lack thereof) particularly at train stations. Again, often there simply are no queues at all. Therefore, queue jumping is a major problem in China. Best bet is to pick a line that looks like it is moving or just wait for everyone to get on or off the bus or train first but you may be left behind! Keep in mind that the concept of personal space more or less does not exist in China. It is perfectly common and acceptable behavior for someone to come in very close contact with you or to bump into you and say nothing. Don't get mad as they will be surprised and most likely won't even understand why you are offended!
• General, disregard of the city; provincial and/or national rules, regulations and laws: This includes (among many other things) dangerous and negligent driving, including excessive speeding, not using head lights at night, lack of use of turn signals, and driving on the wrong side of the street. In conjunction with jaywalking, and smoking in non-smoking areas or defiance of smoking bans including hospitals, inside health clubs and even on football pitches!

• Sanitation: It is very common to for younger children and babies to relieve themselves and to defecate in the street and on the sidewalks. Be careful where you walk! Another fact is that many Chinese do not cover their mouths when they sneeze.

Emergency numbers and embassy contacts in China.

Emergency contact numbers for China:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIRE EMERGENCY</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICE EMERGENCY</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMBULANCE EMERGENCY</td>
<td>120 (999 in Hong Kong and Macau)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERNATIONAL COUNTRY CODE</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public ambulance service is not reliable. Ambulance personnel generally have little training and ambulances may be poorly equipped. Response times may be long due to heavy traffic. Use private transportation or taxi when available. Medical personnel in rural areas may be reluctant to accept responsibility for treating foreigners. Ambulance service may range from traditional ambulance vans and "buses" to golf carts, depending on location, provider and venue.
Contact information for select embassies in China:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australia - Embassy</th>
<th>Canada - Embassy</th>
<th>France - Embassy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 Dongzhimenwai Dajie Sanlitun Beijing 100600 Phone: 010-5140-4111</td>
<td>19 Dongzhimenwai Dajie Chao Yang District Beijing 100600 Phone: 86-10-5139-4000</td>
<td>3 San Li Tun Dong San Jie Beijing 100600 Phone: 86-10-85-32-80-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany - Embassy</td>
<td>Japan - Embassy</td>
<td>Russia - Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Dong Zhi Men Wai Da Jie Beijing 100600 Phone: 0086-10-85-32-90-00</td>
<td>7 Ri Tan Road Jian Guo Men Wai Beijing Phone: 86-10-6532-2361</td>
<td>4 Bei Zhong Jie Dong Zhi Men Beijing 100600 Phone: 86-10-6532-1267/1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain - Embassy</td>
<td>United Kingdom - Embassy</td>
<td>United States - Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanlitun Lu 9 Beijing 100600 Phone: 86-10-6532-3742</td>
<td>11 Guang Hua Lu Jian Guo Men Wai Beijing 100600 Phone: 86-10-5192-4000</td>
<td>55 An Jia Lou Lu Beijing 100600 Phone: 0086-10-8531-3000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a comprehensive listing of embassy contact information in this destination and a comprehensive listing of Cambodian embassies and consulates in other destinations, visit http://embassy.goabroad.com/embassies-in/china.

Individuals should familiarize themselves with the location and contact details of other embassies in case their country's embassy closes due to an emergency or other unexpected circumstances. Another embassy can often provide assistance in such cases.

Major crime issues in China.

Overview

Overall crime levels in China are comparatively low, but street crime is a concern in major population centers, especially cities in the southeastern part of the country. Unemployed migrants from western China have historically been blamed for much of the problem, although widening income disparity and other factors have contributed to a general increase in the country's crime rate. Caution is necessary in certain areas where crime levels are acknowledged to be high, including Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong Province. Criminals may target foreigners due to their perceived wealth, and home invasions and office burglaries occur infrequently in cities where multinationals operate. Banditry is a potential problem in remote parts of the country.

The Chinese government has responded to local and regional crime increases by launching periodic anti-crime campaigns in cities and provinces. These sustained operations typically involve the deployment of extra police and targeted raids to detain gangsters and other criminals.

Organized crime is prevalent in China, especially in major commercial centers in the eastern part of the country. Triads and other organized crime rings have controlling interests in most gambling, prostitution,
drug trafficking, counterfeiting and black market activity. Triads are also deeply involved in different types of transnational crime, including smuggling, some of which extends to Europe and North America. Corruption and the development of a market economy are two factors that have led to a considerable increase in organized crime activity at the local, provincial, regional, and transnational levels since the 1970s. Drug smuggling and related crimes are on the rise, especially in Yunnan and other southern provinces.

**Personal Security**

Petty theft and other nonviolent crimes represent the greatest security concern for visitors and expatriates, especially at heavily-trafficked tourist attractions such as the Great Wall; in crowded areas such as transport hubs, markets and shopping centers; and on buses and trains. Scam artists also frequently target foreigners at bars and other entertainment venues.

Violent crime targeting foreigners is uncommon, but it does occur. Gun-related violence is unusual, but many criminals carry knives, and resisting attack could be fatal. Immediately relinquish valuables if confronted by an armed assailant. Women should not travel alone at night due to the threat of sexual assault.

**Advice**

Traveling in groups and avoiding unfamiliar areas after nightfall is advisable in crime-prone areas. Try to avoid using ATMs at night; limit use to machines inside banks or major hotels. Keep doors and windows locked at all times at hotels and residences. Lock luggage and keep cash, valuables, and personal documents in a hotel or room safe.

Visitors should ensure their passports are secure and out of reach of pickpockets. It is advised that the traveler make photocopies of their passport and biodata pages on the Chinese visa to keep in a secure location in the event they lose their passport and have to apply for a replacement.

Visitors should refrain from discussing politics and/or religion, and criticizing the government, as these are very sensitive topics. Police officers may detain and subsequently deport anyone who does discuss these topics.

Swarms of beggars, including children, operate in many Chinese cities, especially in the hotel and restaurant districts, and are known to aggressively solicit money from tourists. Visitors should avoid beggars due to the risk of petty crime.

Intelligence information is provided by iJET International, Inc. All Rights reserved.

---

**China - Transport**

**Ground transportation options in China.**

China offers a wide variety of transport services, ranging from well-developed metro systems in many urban areas to a rapidly expanding rail system. As in most countries, petty crime is a concern on mass transit and in most stations, but employing commonsense security precautions can reduce the risk. Mass transit can be confusing for travelers unfamiliar with the area so verify travel plans with your hotel or local contact.
Train
The China Railways network is extensive and rapidly growing. The country boasts some of the fastest trains in the world and travel conditions are usually comfortable. Several recent accidents and system difficulties have led to concerns that China may be expanding its rail system too quickly and not following proper safety protocols; however, overall train travel continues to be considered one of the safer methods of travel in China.

Several major cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, have well-established metro systems. These systems are incredibly crowded during peak travel hours. Passengers rarely queue to board subways; instead, pushing and shoving are commonly used. Many foreign nationals are confused by the seemingly maze of routes and schedules, requiring them to seek assistance. In many areas, signs are not available in English.

Bus
Bus travel throughout China is available, but is not recommended. Buses tend to be very slow, overcrowded, uncomfortable, and unreliable. Breakdowns occur frequently. Few amenities are available at stations or on the buses.

Taxis
Taxis are widely available in urban areas. They can be found at taxi stands and often hailed from the street during normal travel hours. Always have your destination written in Chinese to avoid confusion; many drivers may not speak English.

Drivers sometimes try to con foreign nationals into paying higher fares. Always insist that the driver use the meter; if the driver claims it is broken, look for another taxi. Carry plenty of small bills as many drivers will claim to not have change. Be sure to take the taxi receipt; it has a number that can be used to track the taxi if there are any problems.

Driving
Foreign nationals must obtain a temporary license to drive in China. Foreigners are required to have a residency permit valid for at least three months to obtain a temporary license. Individuals must also show their passport, international driver's permit, and a national driver's license. A minimum driving record, indicated on your national or international license, of at least one year is also required. Foreigners must pass a written test and basic medical examination.

Traffic flows on the right. Traffic safety is a major concern. Chinese drivers often ignore driving rules, leading to one of the highest vehicle fatality rates in the world. A boom in car ownership has further contributed to this problem. Most traffic injuries result from collisions involving pedestrians, cyclists, or unexpected road hazards.

While modern expressways are well-maintained, road conditions in rural areas are typically poor. Flooding, landslides, icy conditions, and low visibility are seasonal concerns that can further adversely affect travel safety.

Due to the travel concerns, hiring a car and driver from a reputable firm is preferable. Passengers should record the driver's name and vehicle-registration number and provide the destination address in Chinese. Major hotels can help with these arrangements.
History of China

The first civilizations in China arose in the Yangtze and Yellow River valleys at about the same time as Mesopotamia, Egypt and India developed their first civilizations.

For centuries China stood as a leading civilization, outpacing the rest of the world in the arts and sciences. Paper, gunpowder, the compass and printing (both block and movable type) are examples of Chinese inventions. Chinese developments in astronomy, medicine, and other fields were extensive. There was a Chinese tomb discovered containing a heliocentric model of the solar system, which pre-dated Copernicus by approximately 1,700 years. In mathematics, the Pythagorean Theorem and Pascal's triangle (known in China as Yang Hui's triangle) were known in China centuries before their Western discoverers lived. There were also grand feats of engineering not to be matched in Europe until centuries later, such as the Dujiangyan Irrigation System in Sichuan that was built during the Qin Dynasty, and the Grand Canal from Beijing to Hangzhou with its complex system of locks which was built during the Sui Dynasty.

China was also the first civilization to implement a meritocracy. Unlike other ancient cultures, official posts were not hereditary but instead had to be earned through a series of examinations. They were based on mastery of the Confucian Classics and the literary arts (calligraphy, essay writing, poetry, and painting), a prototype of the exams were first conducted during the Han Dynasty. The system was further refined into the formal Imperial Examination System and opened to all regardless of family background during the Tang Dynasty. The Imperial Examination proved very successful, and aside from being set aside for a brief period during the Yuan Dynasty, continued to be used by all subsequent Chinese dynasties until the beginning of the 20th century. To this day, education is still taken very seriously by Chinese parents.

Historically, East Asia existed in a China-centric order very different from the nation-state system which emerged in Europe. China is the “Middle Kingdom” (中国 Zhōngguó). Foreigners of all nationalities are "outside land people" (外国人 wàiguórén). Rather than sovereign states, the Emperor was sovereign over all "under heaven" (天下 tiānxià) and thus rulers seeking to be "civilized" would need to enter the tributary system. As the Middle Kingdom, China was surrounded by states which paid tribute to the Emperor. The Emperor did not receive ambassadors from these outlanders, only tribute bearers.

New kings in these surrounding countries were designated by the Emperor and granted seals of authority, thus giving them the "right" to rule. Many areas which are now considered part of China — Ningxia, Qinghai, Gansu, Xinjiang, Yunnan, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Manchuria — were once tributary kingdoms and were later formally incorporated as parts of China. Other places not considered part of China — Malacca, Korea, Vietnam, Burma, Mongolia, Nepal, Okinawa, Japan — were also tributaries at various times in history (Okinawa's Shuri Castle has an interesting exhibit on the tributary system). Tributary missions from some countries continued right up until the 20th century. Of course at times, "tributary" states were more militarily powerful than the Chinese dynasty. However, the idealized image of a harmonious order with China and the Emperor at the center endured for centuries.

Tributary relations were complemented by academic, religious, political and cultural exchanges. Tributary rulers received protection, trade benefits, and advisers (academic, political, scientific, etc.). In a sense, China really was the "middle country." Chinese influence is quite apparent in the traditional culture of many of its neighbors, most notably that of Vietnam, Korea and Japan. Each of these countries adopted the Chinese writing system at some point, and it is still in use, to varying degrees and with certain modifications, in the latter two today. Confucian philosophy and social theory deeply influenced their societies. Indeed, Japan's ancient capital of Nara was modeled after the Tang dynasty capital of Chang’An (now Xi’an).

China also explored widely and traded extensively with distant lands. By the 5th and 6th centuries CE, voyages to India and the Arab countries were routine. In the 15th century, the Ming Dynasty fleets under Admiral Zheng He reached as far as East Africa. These ships were very technologically advanced, much
larger than European ships of the day, and equipped with a system of watertight compartments that Europe was not able to match for several centuries. These voyages were not for settlement or conquest, but for trade and tribute. Zheng He's voyages brought tribute and glory but were fabulously expensive. Facing renewed troubles on its northern border, after 1433, China turned inward with a vengeance. Records of the great trading voyages were destroyed in 1477 and the ships rotted away while in dry dock.

The 19th century was a period of wars, rebellions, territorial cession, and turmoil:
Two Opium Wars (鸦片战争 yàpiàn zhànzhēng), 1839-1842 and 1856-1860; pitted China against Western powers, notably Britain and France. China quickly lost both wars. After each defeat, the victors forced the Chinese government to make major concessions. After the first war, the treaty ceded Hong Kong Island to Britain and opened five “treaty ports” (Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Shanghai and Ningbo) to Western trade. After the second, Britain acquired Kowloon, and inland cities such as Nanjing and Wuhan were also opened to trade.

In 1898, Britain acquired a ninety-nine year lease on the New Territories of Hong Kong in the Second Convention of Peking.

The Chinese resented much during this period — notably missionaries, opium, annexation of Chinese land and the extraterritoriality that made foreigners immune to Chinese law. To the West, trade and missionaries were obviously good things, and extraterritoriality was necessary to protect their citizens from the corrupt Chinese system. To many Chinese, however, these were yet more examples of the West exploiting China.

The 20th century brought revolution. The empire was overthrown in 1911 and Sun Yat-sen (孙中山, Sūn Zhōngshān in Mandarin), a doctor, Christian, revolutionary, nationalist, socialist and democrat, became president of the newly formed Republic of China (中华民国 Zhōnghuá Mínguó). He stepped down shortly thereafter allowing the former Qing general Yuan Shih-kai to become president. After an abortive attempt at declaring himself emperor, Yuan died in 1916. Central rule collapsed and China broke into semi-autonomous warlord regions. Until 1949 the various warlords fought challenges to their local power from any outsider, regardless of nationality or ideology.

In 1919, frustrations with China's weakness at the hands of foreign powers, particularly Japan, led to student protests in Beijing. Today known as the "May Fourth Movement" (五四运动 wǔ sì yùndòng) the students called for radical reforms to Chinese society including the use of the vernacular language in writing as well as development of science and democracy. The intellectual ferment of this era gave strength to two rising movements: the Kuomintang (KMT, established in 1919) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP, established in 1921).

In 1926-28, a united front between the KMT and the CCP united much of eastern China under KMT rule after the "Northern Expedition." However, the KMT under Chiang Kai-shek turned on the Communists killing thousands and driving the movement underground. During this time, Mao Zedong set up a base area in the mountains of Jiangxi Province called the Jiangxi Soviet. The Kuomintang launched a series of extermination campaigns against the Communists. Pressure on the Jiangxi Soviet forced the CCP to flee west in 1934. The epic Long March led the CCP and Red Army from Jiangxi across southern and western China before ending in 1935 in Yan'an in Shaanxi Province.

From 1927 to 1937, the KMT consolidated authoritarian one-party rule. Often called the Nanjing Decade after the Kuomintang capital in Nanjing, the period was one of economic expansion, industrialization and urbanization. Many of the great trading families of Hong Kong made their fortunes in Shanghai during this time. Shanghai became one of the world's busiest ports and the most cosmopolitan city in Asia, home to millions of Chinese. It also contained a polyglot community of around 60,000 foreigners which included British, Taipans, American missionaries, Iraqi Jews and refugees from Nazi Germany, Indian police, White Russians and many other notables.
Nonetheless, KMT rule remained fragmented and weak outside of urban centers in eastern China. Severe problems persisted in the countryside including civil unrest, warlord conflict, banditry and major famines.

After the war in 1895, Japan continued its imperial expansion in East Asia. It invaded Manchuria in 1931 and established the puppet kingdom of Manchukuo under the nominal leadership of the last Qing emperor, Pu Yi. Japan launched a full-scale invasion in 1937 and occupied much of eastern China by the end of the decade. Japanese behavior was often brutal; the most extreme example was the 1937 Nanjing Massacre. Chinese resistance was spirited. The Japanese generals thought they could take all of China in three months; instead it took them three months just to drive the Chinese army out of Shanghai and they never did manage to take the entire country. After the expected quick victory in China, Japan's generals planned to move most of their army to other fronts, but in fact roughly half the Japanese army were tied up in China throughout the war. The Allies sent aid via the Burma Road.

As a result of the Japanese invasion, the Kuomintang and Communists signed a tenuous agreement in 1937 to form a second united front. The agreement broke down in the early 1940s. The Kuomintang frequently held back troops from fighting the Japanese and used them against the Communists. The Communists used the power vacuum behind the Japanese lines to expand their guerrilla operations and set up rural networks. The stage was set for the Communists under Mao Zedong and the Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-shek to openly fight each other after Japan's defeat.

Outright civil war resumed in 1946. Corruption, hyperinflation, defections and desertions crippled the KMT government and army. In 1949, the Communists won; the Kuomintang took the national gold reserves and imperial treasure and fled to Taiwan. There the KMT reestablished them-selves and promised to recapture the Mainland. Various Western countries refused to recognize "Red China" and continued to treat the Kuomintang as the only "legitimate" government of China, some until the early '70s.

The new Communist government implemented strong measures to restore law and order and to revive industrial, agricultural and commercial institutions reeling from more than a decade of war. By 1955, China's economy had returned to pre-war levels of output as factories, farms, labor unions, civil society and governance were brought under Party control. After an initial period closely hewing to the Soviet model of heavy industrialization and comprehensive central economic planning, China began to experiment with adapting Marxism to a largely agrarian society.

Massive social experiments, such as the Hundred Flowers Campaign (百花运动 bǎihuā yùndòng) and the Great Leap Forward (大跃进 dàyuèjìn), intended to industrialize China quickly, and the Cultural Revolution (无产阶级文化大革命 wǔchǎn jiējí wénhuà dà gémìng), aimed at changing everything by discipline, destruction of the "Four Olds," and attention to Mao Zedong Thought rocked China from 1957 to 1976. The Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution are generally considered disastrous failures by many Chinese. The cultural and historical damage from the Cultural Revolution is still evident today. Many traditional Chinese customs, such as the celebration of the Hungry Ghost Festival (中元节 zhōngyuán jié), are still thriving in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and overseas Chinese communities, but have largely disappeared from mainland China.

Mao Zedong died in 1976. One month later, his widow was arrested as part of the "Gang of Four." The gang was blamed for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping became China's paramount leader. Deng and his lieutenants gradually introduced market-oriented reforms and decentralized economic decision making. Economic output quadrupled by 2000 and continues to grow by about 8% a year, but huge problems remain — bouts of serious inflation, regional and income inequality, human rights abuses, massive pollution, rural poverty and corruption. China also firmly remains a one-party authoritarian state and political controls remain tight even though economic policy continues to be relaxed, enough for China to secure admission to the World Trade Organization, (WTO). In 2003, the CCP changed its statutes to accept a new category of members: "Red Capitalists." October 2007 saw the first official guarantees for private property, a clear step away from doctrinaire communist economics.
The former president and CCP General Secretary, Hu Jintao, has proclaimed a policy for a "Harmonious Society" (和 谐 社 会 héxié shèhuì) which promised to restore balanced economic growth and to channel investment and prosperity into China's central and western provinces, which have been largely left behind in the economic boom since 1978. This policy involves additional tax breaks for farmers, a rural medical insurance scheme, reduction or elimination of school tuition fees and infrastructure development to encourage investment in underdeveloped areas, e.g. the Beijing/Lhasa railway - a dream first put down on paper by Sun Yat-sen in the early 1900's.
Map of Beijing
Climate in Beijing
ABOUT BEIJING

Beijing literally means Northern Capital, a role it has played many times in China's long history. Beijing's history dates back several thousand years but it first became notable in Chinese history after it was made the capital of the State of Yan under the name Yanjing. Yan was one of the major kingdoms of the Warring States Period, some 2,000 years ago. After the fall of Yan, during the later Han and Tang dynasties, the Beijing-area was a major prefecture of northern China.

In 938, Beijing was conquered by the Khitans and declared the capital of the Liao Dynasty. The Mongols seized the city in 1215. From 1264 on, Beijing served as the capital of a united China under Kublai Khan. His victorious Mongol forces renamed the city, Great Capital (大都). From there, KUBLAI and his decedents ruled their empire from a northern location closer to the Mongol homelands. During this period, the walled city was enlarged and many palaces and temples were built.

After the fall of the Mongol-founded Yuan dynasty in 1368, the capital was initially moved to Nanjing. However, in 1403 the 3rd Ming emperor, Zhu Di, moved it back to Beijing and gave the city its present name. The Ming period was Beijing's golden era. The Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven and many other Beijing landmarks were built in this period. The capital developed into a huge city becoming the religious and cultural center of Asia.

In 1644, the Manchus overthrew the declining Ming dynasty and established China's last imperial line - the Qing. Despite the changing political climate, Beijing remained the capital. The Manchu imperial family moved into the Forbidden City and remained there until 1911. The Qing built both the Summer Palace and Old Summer Palace. These served as summer retreats for the emperors and their entourages. During the 19th century, Western countries established foreign legations in the Qianmen area south of the Forbidden City. These came under siege during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900.

The Qing dynasty fell in 1911. In the chaotic first years of Republican China, Beijing was beset by fighting warlords. Following the Northern Expedition, the Kuomintang moved the capital to Nanjing in 1928, and renamed Beijing as Beiping ("Northern Peace") to emphasize that it was no longer a capital. Beijing remained a center for education and culture throughout the Republican Era. When the Kuomintang was defeated by the Communists in 1949, the new government proclaimed a People's Republic with its capital at Beijing.

**Landmarks**

The center of the city and most important landmark is Tiananmen Square in Dongcheng District. This is the world's largest public square and a must see for all visitors from elsewhere in China and abroad. The square is surrounded by grand buildings that include the Great Hall of the People, the Museum of Chinese History, the Museum of the Chinese Revolution, the Qianmen Gate and the Forbidden City. It is also home to the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall and the Monument to the People's Martyrs.

The National Stadium or Bird's Nest in Chaoyang District is a new major landmark and the symbol of the 2008 Olympic Games. Two contemporary buildings in Chaoyang District are remarkable landmarks: the CCTV Building (sometimes called The Underpants or Bird Legs by locals) and the World Trade Center Tower III. Both are outstanding examples of contemporary architecture.

There are also a number of remarkable remains from the medieval city including the Ming Dynasty City Wall Site Park (the only remains of the city wall) in Chongwen District, the Drum and Bell Towers in Dongcheng District, and Qianmen in Chongwen District.

**Palaces, Temples and Parks**
The most important palace, bar none, is the Forbidden City (故宫博物院) in Dongcheng District. The Forbidden City was home to the Imperial Court during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Unlike many other historical sights, the Forbidden City was relatively untouched during the cultural revolution due to the timely intervention of premier, Zhou Enlai, who sent a battalion of his troops to guard the palace from the over-zealous Red Guards. The Temple of Heaven (天坛) in Chongwen District is the symbol of Beijing and is surrounded by a lively park typically packed with hordes of local people drinking tea, practicing calligraphy or tai-chi or even just watching the world go by. The Yonghegong (Lama Temple) (雍和宫) in Dongcheng District is one of the most important and beautiful temples in the country.

Other parks are scattered around Beijing. Some of the best are Zhongshan Park (中山公园) in the Xicheng District, Beihai Park (北海公园) in the Xicheng District, Chaoyang Park (朝阳公园) in the Chaoyang District and Ritan Park (日坛公园) in the Chaoyang District. The Beijing Zoo (北京动物园) in the Xicheng District is famous for its traditional landscaping and giant pandas, however like many zoos, the conditions for the animals have been questioned.

The Haidian District is home to the Summer Palace (颐和园), the ruins of the Old Summer Palace (圆明园), Fragrant Hills (香山), and the Beijing Botanical Garden (北京植物园). All are quite close together and worth a visit.

Museums and Galleries

The museums in Beijing are generally not yet up to the standard seen in cities such as Paris, Rome and New York. However, the city contains one of the largest and most well-known museums in Asia, the Palace Museum also known as the Forbidden City. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Chinese government is determined to change the backward perception of its museums and has invested heavily in their development. It has also made most of them (unfortunately, not the Forbidden City) free to visit. However, some museums tickets must be reserved up to three days in advance.

One of the most well-known museums in Beijing is the National Museum (国家博物馆) in the Dongcheng District, which closed for major renovations in 2007 and reopened in March of 2011. The Military Museum (军事博物馆) in the Haidian District has long been a favorite with domestic and foreign tourists. The Capital Museum (首都博物馆) in the Xicheng District is a new high profile museum with historical as well as art exhibitions. Finally, a number of restored former residences of famous Beijingers, especially in the Xicheng District, give a good insight into daily life in past times.

The contemporary art scene in Beijing is booming and a large number of artists exhibit and sell their art in galleries around the city. The galleries are concentrated in a number of art districts, including the oldest and easiest accessible, but also increasingly commercial and mainstream, Dashanzi Art District is found in the Chaoyang District. Other newer and perhaps more cutting edge art districts include Caochangdi in the Chaoyang District and Songzhuan Artist's Village in the Tongzhou District.

Walks and Rides

Hutongs (胡同 Hútòng), Beijing's ancient alleyways, are where you can find traditional Beijing architecture. They date back to when Beijing was the capitol of the Yuan dynasty (1266-1368). Most buildings in hutongs are built with the traditional courtyard (四合院 sìhéyuàn) style. Many of these courtyard homes were originally occupied by aristocrats, though after the Communist takeover in 1949 the aristocrats were all pushed out and replaced with poor families. Hutongs can still be found throughout the area within the 2nd Ring Road, though many are being demolished to make way for new buildings and wider roads. Most popular among tourists are the hutongs near Qianmen and Houhai. The hutongs
may at first feel intimidating to travelers used to the new wide streets of Beijing, but the locals are very friendly and will often try to help you if you look lost.

Rent a bicycle. Traverse some of the remaining hutongs. There is no better way to see Beijing firsthand than on a bicycle but just be very aware of cars (Chinese driving styles may differ from those you are used to). See above for bike rental information

**Theaters and Concert Halls**

National Centre for the Performing Arts in Xicheng District was finalized in 2007 and finally gave Beijing a modern theater complex covering opera, music and theater. This is worth a visit even if you do not go to a performance.

The Beijing Opera is considered the most famous of all the traditional opera performed around China. This kind of opera is nothing like western opera with costumes, singing style, music and spectator reactions being distinctly Chinese. The plot is usually quite simple, so you might be able to understand some of what happens even if you do not understand the language. Some of the best places to watch Beijing Opera are found in Xuanwu District including Huguang Huguang Theatre and Lao She Teahouse. There are also a number in Dongcheng District including Chang'an Grand Theatre.

Acrobatics shows are also worth a visit if you want to see some traditional Chinese entertainment. Some of the best shows are found in Tianqiao Acrobatics Theatre in Xuanwu District and in Chaoyang Theatre in Chaoyang District.

Drama plays has had a slow start in Beijing and is still not as widespread as you might expect for a city like Beijing, and you will most likely not be able to find many Western plays. However, some good places for contemporary Chinese plays do exist including Capital Theatre in Dongcheng District and Century Theater in Chaoyang District.

Classical music has got a much stronger foothold in Beijing than drama plays. Some of the best places to go are the National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Century Theater both mentioned above as well as Beijing Concert Hall in Xicheng District.
Forbidden City

The Forbidden City is the best preserved imperial palace in China and the largest ancient palatial structure in the world.

It is recognized as one of the most important five palaces in the world (the other four are the Palace of Versailles in France, Buckingham Palace in the UK, the White House in the US and the Kremlin in Russia). The splendid architecture of the Forbidden City represents the essence and culmination of traditional Chinese architectural accomplishment.

In 1961 the Forbidden City was listed as one of the important historical monuments under the special preservation by the Chinese central government and, in 1987, it was nominated as World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. The Palace Museum is a real treasure house of Chinese cultural and historical relics.

The Forbidden City, situated in the very heart of Beijing, was home to 24 emperors of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The construction of the grand palace started in the fourth year of Emperor Yongle of the Ming Dynasty (1406), and ended in 1420. In ancient times, the emperor claimed to be the son of Heaven, and therefore Heaven’s supreme power was bestowed upon him. The emperors’ residence on earth was built as a replica of the Purple Palace where God was thought to live in Heaven. Such a divine place was certainly forbidden to ordinary people and that is why the Forbidden City is so named.

The Forbidden City covers an area of about 72 hectares with a total floor space of approximately 150,000 square meters. It consists of 90 palaces and courtyards, 980 buildings and 8,704 rooms. To represent the supreme power of the emperor given from God, and the place where he lived being the center of the world, all the gates, palace and other structures of the Forbidden City were arranged about the south-north central axis of Beijing.
Tiananmen Square

The Tiananmen Gate to the Forbidden City was built in 1415 during the Ming Dynasty. Towards, the demise of the Ming Dynasty, heavy fighting between Li Zicheng and the early Qing emperors damaged (or perhaps destroyed) the gate. The Tian'anmen square was designed and built in 1651, and has since enlarged four times its original size in the 1950s.

Near the centre of today's square, stood the "Great Ming Gate", the southern gate to the Imperial City, renamed "Great Qing Gate" during the Qing Dynasty, and "Gate of China" during the Republic of China era. Unlike the other gates in Beijing, such as the Tiananmen and the Qianmen, this was a purely ceremonial gateway, with three arches but no ramparts, similar in style to the ceremonial gateways found in the Ming Dynasty Tombs. This gate had a special status as the "Gate of the Nation", as can be seen from its successive names. It normally remained closed, except when the Emperor passed through. Commoner traffic was diverted to two side gates at the northern and eastern ends of today's square, respectively. Because of this diversion in traffic, a busy marketplace, called Chessgrid Streets developed in the big, fenced square to the south of this gate.

British and French troops who invaded Beijing in 1860 pitched camp near the gate and briefly considered burning down the gate and the entire Forbidden City. They decided ultimately to spare the palace and to burn instead the emperor's Old Summer Palace. The Qing emperor eventually agreed to let the foreign powers establish headquarters in the area. During the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 the siege badly damaged the office complexes and several ministries were burnt down. In the conflict's denouement, the area became a space for foreign troops to assemble their armies and horses.

In the early 1950s, the Gate of China was demolished, allowing for the enlargement of the square. In November 1958 a major expansion of Tiananmen Square started, which was completed after only 10 months, in August 1959. This followed the vision of Mao Zedong to make the square the largest and most spectacular in the world, and intended to hold over 500,000 people. In that process, a large number of residential buildings and other structures have been demolished. On its southern edge, the Monument to the People's Heroes has been erected. Concomitantly, as part of the Ten Great Buildings constructed between 1958-59 to commemorate the ten year anniversary of the People's Republic of China, the Great Hall of the People and the Revolutionary History Museum (now National Museum of China) were erected on the western and eastern sides of the square.

The year after Mao's death in 1976, a Mausoleum was built near the site of the former Gate of China, on the main north-south axis of the square. In connection with this project, the square was further increased in size to become fully rectangular and being able to accommodate 600,000 persons. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiananmen_Square - cite_note-Li_2007-4
The urban context of the square was altered in the 1990s with the construction of National Grand Theatre in its vicinity and the expansion of the National Museum.

Used as a massive meeting place since its creation, its flatness is contrasted by the 38-meter (125 ft.) high Monument to the People's Heroes, and the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong. The square lies between two ancient, massive gates: the Tian'anmen to the north and the Zhengyangmen, better known as Qianmen to the south. Along the west side of the Square is the Great Hall of the People. Along the east side is the National Museum of China (dedicated to Chinese history predating 1919). Chang'an Avenue, which is used for parades, lies between the Tian'anmen and the Square. Trees line the east and west edges of the Square, but the square itself is open, with neither trees nor benches. The Square is lit with large lampposts which are fitted with video cameras. It is heavily monitored by uniformed and plain clothes policemen.
The Great Wall of China

The history of these extraordinary fortifications goes back to the Chunqiu period (722-481 B.C.) and to the Warring States period (453-221 B.C.), so-called because of the long struggle among seven rival dynasties for supreme power. The construction of certain walls can be explained by these feudal conflicts, such as the one built by the Wei in 408 B.C. to defend their kingdom against the Qin. Its vestiges, conserved in the center of China, proceed by many years the walls that the Kingdoms of Qin, Zhao and Yan erected against the northern barbarians around 300 B.C.

Beginning in 220 B.C., Qin Shi Huang, the founder of the Empire of the Ten Thousand Generations, undertook to restore and link up the separate sections of the Great Wall which had been built in the 3rd century B.C., or perhaps even earlier, and which stretched from the region of the Ordos to Manchuria. Towards the west, he had the fortifications extended in the valley of the Huanghe all the way to Lanzhou. Thus was the first cohesive defense system of which significant vestiges still remain, completed, shortly before the accession of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.). During their reign the Great Wall was extended even further, and under the emperor Wudi (140-87 B.C.) it spanned approximately 3700 miles (6,000 kilometers) between Dunhuang in the west to Bohai Sea in the east. The danger of incursion along northern Chinese border by the federated tribes of Mongols, Turks and Tunguz of the Empire of the Xiongnu, the first empire of the steppes, made a defense policy more necessary than ever. Alternating military actions with intensive diplomatic efforts, this policy entailed massive relocation of Chinese peoples within the frontier zone. In 102 B.C., there were 180,000 peasant soldiers in the "command posts" of Gansu.

After the downfall of the Han dynasty (220 A.D.), the Great Wall entered its medieval phase. Construction and maintenance work were halted, only occasionally being recommenced. Under the Northern Wei, for example, a 600 mile (1,000-kilometer) section of wall was built in 423; this was added to in the 6th century, but work was suspended during the Tang period (618-907). China at that time enjoyed such great military power that the need for a defense policy was no longer felt.

It was the Ming emperors (1368-1644) who, after the long period of conflict which ended with the expulsion of the Mongols, revived the tradition begun by Qin Shi Huang. During the Ming dynasty, 3500 miles (5,650 kilometers) of crenelated wall were built. The stones used were incredibly well matched, and the wall was fortified by 25,000 towers and protected by 15,000 outposts. To defend the northern frontier, the Wall was divided into nine Zhen, which were military districts rather than simple garrisons. At strategic points, fortresses were built to defend the towns (e.g. Jinshanling for Peking), passes or fords. The passageways running along the top of the wall made it possible to move troops rapidly and, in peace time, for imperial couriers to travel. Two symbolic monuments still proudly stand at either end of the wall. These are the "First Door under Heaven" at Shanhaiguan, located at the wall's eastern end, and the "Last Door under Heaven" at Jiayuguan, which, as part of the fortress entirely restored after 1949, marks its northwestern end.

The Great Wall at Mutainyu is located in the Huairou District of Beijing. According to historical literature, this section of the Great Wall was built under the supervision of General Xu Da of Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang in the early Ming Dynasty. Mutianyu is a favorite tourist spot given its close proximity to Beijing. You can take a chairlift up to the Great Wall then when you are finished sightseeing you can take the slide back down.
Map of Shanghai
Climate in Shanghai
ABOUT SHANGHAI

Shanghai is a fascinating mix of East and West. It has historic *shikumen* (石库门) houses that blend the styles of Chinese houses with European design flair, and it has one of the richest collections of Art Deco buildings in the world. As there were so many concessions (designated districts) to Western powers during the turn of the 20th century, at times the city has a cosmopolitan feel. From classic Parisian style, to Tudor style buildings that give an English flair, while the 1930s buildings put you in more familiar cities such as New York or Chicago.

While Shanghai has been around as a village since the Song Dynasty, it only rose to prominence towards the end of the Qing Dynasty, as many of the Western powers saw it as an ideal trade center. After losing several wars, Shanghai was divided between China and the Eight-nation Alliance consisting of Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom. The granting of concessions to these powers shaped Shanghai's cityscape significantly. British-style architecture can still be seen on The Bund, while French-style can be witnessed in the former French Concession, and there are even traditional Chinese-style buildings that can be seen near the Yuyuan Gardens. Shanghai reached its zenith in 1920’s-1930’s and was at that point in time, the most prosperous city in East Asia. Despite prosperity, much of the streets of Shanghai were ruled by the triads during that period, with the renowned gang often battling for control over parts of Shanghai. That period has been greatly romanticized in many modern films and television serials, one of the most famous being The Bund, which was produced by Hong Kong’s TVB in 1980. Shanghai had also become the main center of Chinese entertainment during that period, with much cinema and music produced in the city.

Shanghai was occupied by the Japanese in World War II, during which many of the Western powers lost their concessions in Shanghai. After the war, the Communists took over Shanghai in 1949, and a combination of these events spelled an end for the first period of prosperity in Shanghai. Many of the people involved in the entertainment industry, as well as many foreign and Chinese business people were persecuted by the communists, which caused many of them to flee to Hong Kong and Taiwan, where many remain to this day.

In the beginning of the 1990s, the Shanghai government launched a series of new strategies to attract foreign investments. The biggest move was to open up Pudong, once a rural area of Shanghai but which has since been converted to a business center that countries the world over may envy. The strategies for growth have made tremendous gains and now Pudong is home to many of the duties which used to take place across the Huangpu in The Bund, housed in numerous skyscrapers - including the 3rd biggest in the world - the World Financial Center.

Citizens have a saying, "Shanghai is heaven for the rich, hell for the poor," which reflects the resurgence Shanghai has made since the new government was put into place more than 60 years ago.

Today, Shanghai’s goal is to develop into a world-class financial and economic center of China and Asia. In achieving this goal, Shanghai faces competition from Hong Kong, which has the advantage of a stronger legal system and greater banking and service expertise. Shanghai has stronger links to the Chinese interior and to the central government in addition to a stronger manufacturing and technology base. Since the return of Hong Kong to China, Shanghai has increased its role in finance, banking, and as a major destination for corporate headquarters, fueling demand for a highly educated and cosmopolitan workforce.

Shanghai is one of the least polluted major cities in China, although the degree of pollution might be more severe when using international comparisons. For this reason, coupled with a lesser degree of focus placed on national politics, visitors will find a much different experience than visiting Beijing making Shanghai a world unto its own a lot like Hong Kong, with the big difference being that it is located on the mainland.
Places of Interest

The French Concession is a lovely part of Shanghai because it feels like you're just in a local neighborhood despite the fact that you're in the heart of a city with a population exceeding seventeen million. The French imported plane trees in the early 1900s and these trees still line both sides of every street in the area. These days, old villas and lane houses are being renovated and turned into lovely shops and homes. It’s fun to wander the less-congested streets and watch oldies chatting on the sidewalks and vendors market their wares.

While kitschy, the Yu Garden area is a fun place to explore. The whole area around the gardens has been renovated in traditional style Chinese architecture with curving tile eaves that make you feel like you've finally found "Chinatown". You may wander through the lanes and alleys to find everything you might want to take home as souvenirs, ranging from silk pajamas to chopsticks. Eventually, you'll come to the Huxingting Tea House that supposedly inspired the design in the famous Blue Willow china pattern. Across the way is the entrance to Yuyuan Garden itself where you can follow crowds through a textbook example of a classical Ming garden.

The Bund is Shanghai's most famous landmark. You might have buzzed in and out of a fancy dinner in one of the renovated buildings but take a morning to really enjoy the area and peek inside some of the buildings. A great way to visit the Bund on a nice day is to be dropped off at the Peace Hotel (formerly the Cathay Hotel) and walk south, ducking into buildings along the way.

If you'd like to see what's happening on the contemporary art scene in China, take a taxi to Moganshan Road near Suzhou Creek. Once an industrial factory and warehouse district, the area is now a thriving art colony that is full of galleries of every size. There’s a café near the entrance to the lane where you can have a nice coffee once you've explored the scene.

Now the second tallest building in Shanghai, the Jin Mao Tower stands at 88 floors. Its remarkable architecture is recognizable on a clear day from all over the city. There’s an observation deck on the 88th floor (access costs 50rmb, US$6) where you have spectacular views of the neighboring skyscrapers and the sprawling city. You may also enjoy similar views with a cocktail in hand at the Cloud 9 bar on the 87th floor of the Grand Hyatt hotel. Note, access to the observation deck and Cloud 9 are completely separate. Follow signs at the ground level to the observation deck, follow Grand Hyatt signs to get to the hotel elevators and Cloud 9.

If you're in the mood for some shopping but are tired of touts shoving fake watches in your face, head to Taikang Road. A walk down the road opens your eyes to see local Shanghai life at its best: street vendors selling pancakes and fruit, children scampering about and women hanging up laundry. Then find alley 210 and wander down the lane. It's full of shops and cafes selling everything from traditional Chinese qi pao dresses to funky silver jewelry.
OLD SHANGHAI

Beyond the tourist theme parks of Yuyuan and the "Shanghai Old Street" lies a little known treasure trove of living history. In Old Shanghai, as foreign norms and architecture dominated the rest of the city, its "Chinatown" was a crowded place of winding streets, vibrant markets, entrenched customs all accompanied by a lifestyle that remained relatively unaltered despite the rapid pace of change engulfing it. That description still holds true today, and the little back lanes of the Old City remain an intriguing anachronism of the way life was lived over a century ago. The chaos, history, decay, and picturesque squalor are an anthropologist's dream and a city planner's nightmare.

Numerous buses that crowd their way down Huaihai Lu have their terminus at "Lao Xi Men," or the old West Gate of the City. Little remains of the old gate aside from the bus stop and a motley assortment of little shops. But just north of Lao Xi Men sits the sole surviving remnants of the wall that once protected Shanghai from Japanese pirates. The Dajing Tower, an unassuming stone structure in the traditional southeastern Chinese style, provides the perfect place to begin an exploration of Shanghai's Old City. Along with some traditional art of questionable quality, Dajing Tower contains an extensive exhibition of photographs depicting historical representations of the customs and demographics of life within these walls. Religion, festivals, operas and markets are covered by the collection, and a model shows the previous layout of the Old City in its original form. Desciptions are almost all in Chinese, but even without a translator you will leave enlightened and ready to discover this city for yourself.