

Travel Tips

- **Dress code:**
 - According to the MCE programs, everyone is required to wear business casual clothes on the company visits—no exceptions. So please use your discretion and dress appropriately.
 - For men this means slacks, button down shirts, and a tie. A suit or jacket is not needed.
 - Ladies, slacks or skirts are fine, but nothing too short or revealing.
 - You don't need a different outfit for each company visit!
 - Please be sure that your shoes are comfortable. We will be doing a good bit of walking.
- **Laundry:**
 - Laundry service is available at the hotel with a reasonable (but not very cheap) price, e.g. \$1.3 (8 yuan) for T-shirt, \$2 (13 yuan) for pants.
- **Hotel:**
 - Two students will share one bedroom and one bathroom in a hotel setting.
 - Each bedroom is equipped with a TV, a desk, A/C, internet cable, a telephone, a hairdryer, and a safe deposit box.
 - Towels, toothbrush, toothpaste, and shampoo will be provided every day.
 - You do not need to bring pillows or beddings.
- **Food:**
 - All the breakfasts are covered by the program. We've paid for them. So please get up early and give yourself enough time to have your breakfast before we leave the hotel.
 - When we eat together off campus during the day, the program will pay for the cost of the meals.
 - We will have a welcome dinner and a farewell dinner together, and several meals together (e.g. to eat Peking duck) during the trip. The program pays for the cost of these meals.
 - Except for these meals, you will need to take care of your own lunch and dinner. There are plenty of dining places inside and around the hotel. The cost for lunch and dinner is typically less than \$8 per person per meal at those places.
 - Chinese people eat using chopsticks rather than westernized utensils. If you don't know how to use chopsticks, I would first try to learn while there before bringing disposable utensils, but it is up to you. If you feel you are more comfortable using a fork and knife to eat, please remember to bring a box of them to China with you.
 - Tap water is not safe to drink in China. Bottled water can be purchased everywhere.
 - When ordering beverages, do not order it with ice, because ice will most likely be made using tap water.
- **Internet:**
 - Each room will have access to internet. The program pays for it. You may bring your laptop computer with you.
- **Phone call:**
 - Each bedroom is equipped with a telephone.
 - You can answer phone calls (including phone calls from your parents in US) for free, but you need to pay for local, long distance or international calls, and it is expensive to make international calls (about \$1 per min).
 - You may buy international calling cards online if you want to make cheap international calls (less than 10 cents per min), but typically you first need to dial a local number. (An

example is www.cybercalling.com).

- Most cell phone service providers have international plans available, you need to activate such plans before you leave if you need to use your cell phone in China, but they are typically very expensive.
- If you can unlock your cell phone before you leave, you may buy and use SIMS cards in China.
- The simplest and cheapest cell phone costs about \$15 (100 Yuan) in China. You may also consider buying one while in China.
- It is a good idea to use online tools such as Skype, messenger, etc to call home (since you have internet access). Most laptops have speakers and mics and you may use them for phone call. But if you need privacy, you may bring your microphone and headset with you if you already have them or you may buy them in China.

- **Electricity**

- US uses 110 volt 60 cycle current with a US plug.
- China uses 220 volt 50 cycle current with a Chinese plug. You can find plug converters (that can fit US plugs but does not convert the voltage) in the store or supermarket close to the hotel.
- You need to convert the voltage from 220 to 110 V for most electronic devices you bring with you.
- Some products (laptops, cell phone chargers, some hairdryers) have a switch for changing built in...you switch it or it does it for you. Some need to have a current transformer (converter) that you buy separately to change 220 to 110 V.
- Moral: do you really need to take that electrical thing with you? If the answer is yes, you need to sort out what you need to do to make it work where you are going.
- I recommend you bring your US cell phone with you if you won't use it in China for the convenience of communication before the airplane takes off after you come back.

- **Miscellaneous:**

- Please remember to bring tissue/Kleenex (it can be purchased in China) and hand sanitizer with you when traveling. Some public bathrooms in China do not have these items available.
- We also recommend you to bring the following items: sunscreen, band-aids and antibiotic cream, and anti-diarrheal medication.
- Weather in May in Beijing averages 82 high/62 low. Bring an umbrella with you or buy one once you get there.
- Bring dental floss with you if you need to use it. It is difficult to find it in China.
- Don't exchange money with strangers (fake money and illegal). The exchange rate in airport is much lower (i.e. less RMB per dollar) than what the bank offers. There are many banks around the hotel. The hotel front desk also exchanges currency at a rate similar to the bank's. You can use either cash or ATM cards. Most ATM cards we use here work in China.
- Watch out for pickpocketing (do not carry passport and valuables with you, but lock them in your room).
- Be smart and use your best judgment when you are interacting with strangers in public places.
- Squatty Potties: Many public restrooms in China use squatty potties instead of western style toilets. When using it, you need to squat all the way down (go into your catcher's stance).

You can roll your pants up (if they are long) to keep your pants from coming in contact with the floor, and keep them around your knees (don't take them off) just as they are when you use a pedestal toilet. *(It may look awkward at the beginning, but using the squatty potties may also have benefits. To me, they are more hygienic than pedestal toilets in public places. And some research studies have shown that squatty potties are effective in preventing hemorrhoids and colon cancer.)*

- Be sure to ask me or Vanessa if you are not sure of anything, and inform us if you do not feel comfortable for any reason.

- **How to pack**

- Two checked bags at the most (check with the airlines to make sure that your bag is not oversized or over weighted), one carry-on, one personal item (purse size).
- Remember to carry these items with you on plane: Passport & Visa, Cash, Contact info in China, Medical Insurance Card. (After you arrive in China, keep your passport, visa, and cash in a safe place; only take necessary amount of cash with you; always take your contact info in China with you)
- Most banks in China nowadays can take major American ATM cards.
- I recommend you take at least one jacket with you on the airplane, because it may be chilly in the airplane especially when we come back.
- All checked bags are X-rayed (be careful with film).
- Reality: pack light!
- There are a lot of stores including supermarkets very close to the hotel. You can buy most of the groceries and daily consumables there at a much cheaper price than you may find in US.

- **Tell your parents your blog website before you leave and update your page while you are in China. They will be less worried and excited if they can check your daily activity. (Facebook is blocked in China. Do not try to jump over the internet firewalls in China, which may lead to serious consequences.)**