

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 hotels 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, but you can bring your own or buy them at the market there if you want to.
 - 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.
 - We will have a welcome dinner and a farewell dinner together, and a number of meals together 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 hotels. 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.
 - Tap water is not safe to drink in China. Bottled water can be purchased everywhere.
 - When ordering beverages, do not order it with ice (unless in well-known restaurant franchises, e.g. KFC, McDonald, etc.), because ice will most likely be made using tap water.
- **Cash**
 - The best and the most convenient way to get cash is to use ATM machines in the hotels. Most ATM cards we use here work 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.
 - The hotel front desk may also exchange currency at a rate similar to or slightly lower than the bank's rate, but you will need your passport and it is a very time-consuming (15-20 min per person) and complicated process.
- **Internet:**
 - Hotels will have access to internet. The program pays for it. It is recommended that you

bring your laptop computer with you.

- Some websites and most internet social networks with a server outside China including Facebook, Twitter, and Google are blocked in China. Access to Gmail may also be difficult.
- Wired connection is typically much faster than wireless connection.

- **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).
- It is a good idea to use online tools, such as Skype, to call home since you have internet access. If your laptop has speakers and mics and you may use them for phone call. But if your laptop does not have those or you need privacy, you may bring your microphone and/or headset with you.
- 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.
- I recommend you bring your US cell phone with you (even if you won't use it in China) for the convenience of communication before the airplane takes off and after you come back.

- **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.
- Some products (most laptops, cell phones) have a build-in converter. You switch it or it does it for you automatically.
- If you use electronic devices that do not have a build-in converter, you need to convert the voltage from 220 to 110 V before you plug in the devices. Otherwise, the device may get burnt.
- 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.

- **Miscellaneous:**

- Weather in May in Beijing averages 82 high/62 low, and it does rain occasionally. Bring an umbrella with you or you can buy one once you get there.
- Do not carry passport and valuables with you, but lock them in your room, and remember to take them with you when you leave the hotel.
- Watch out for pickpocketing.
- Be smart and use your best judgment when you are interacting with strangers in public places.
- Please remember to bring tissue/toilet paper (it can be purchased in China) and hand sanitizer with you when traveling. Some public bathrooms in China do not have these items available.
- 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.)

- Bring dental floss with you if you need to use it. It may be difficult to find it in China.
- We also recommend you to bring the following items: sunscreen, band-aids and antibiotic cream, mosquito repellent, and anti-diarrheal medication.
- Be sure to ask me or Christin if you are not sure of anything, and inform us if you do not feel comfortable for any reason.

- **How to pack**

- One checked bag 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, some 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 card with you*)
- I recommend you take at least one jacket with you on the airplane, because it may be chilly in the airplane especially when you come back.
- All checked bags are X-rayed (be careful with film).
- Reality: pack light!
- There are stores including supermarkets very close to the hotels. You can buy most of the groceries and daily consumables there.
- Last, you can tell your parents and friends your blog website, so that they may see your daily activity.