

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW AND WHAT DO I PACK

Carry Copies of Everything!

Before your departure, make **photocopies of your passport page that documents your personal identification and passport number as well as your China Visa page**. You may also take a photo of this page with your smart phone. Leave one copy at home, so that a family member or friend can access it in case you lose your passport while out of the country. Take one copy with you, keeping it in a safe place **separate** from your passport.

Health Insurance documents.

Emergency information and contact information

Hotel and contact information (we will supply you with this in advance)

Airline tickets: Your tickets are electronic so you just need to bring your id.

Travel insurance is required. It covers reimbursement of expenses that may be incurred during the course of your trip (e.g. baggage loss, trip interruption, certain medical expenses, etc.)

Travel insurance is available from our travel agent, your travel agent or online from Travel Guard at www.travelguard.com. If you decide not to purchase insurance you will be required to sign a waiver.

Luggage Allowance: On the International flight: 2 pieces of checked luggage (weighing up to 70 pounds each) plus 1 carry on. On the domestic flights within China: 1 piece of checked luggage (weighing up to 50 pounds) plus one or two carry on pieces that will fit under the seat : e.g. a back pack and a hand bag or fanny pack.

You should be able to easily identify and to securely lock your luggage.

Even though each passenger is allowed two pieces of checked luggage on international flights, flights within China limit each passenger to one piece of luggage not weighing more than 25 kilos. **You are advised to not bring more than 1 piece of luggage to China**. You can purchase another piece of luggage in China, before we depart for the states to carry purchases made in China. You can check 2 pieces of luggage when returning to the US. If you have extra luggage when traveling in China, you may be required to pay an excess baggage charge at each airport. (Last reported at 1.5% of published fare for every 2 pounds of weight.)

The checked baggage should be able to withstand a certain extent of pressure, completely sealed, well-locked and firmly tied up. If your baggage is not packed in accordance with the requirements: the carrier can refuse to accept for carriage and will not be liable for any damage or breakage thereof. Please have your luggage marked so you, or other group members, can easily identify it from a distance. Brightly colored straps sold in the luggage department or travel stores works well.

Packing Tips:

Lightweight (canvas or nylon) luggage is the most practical. We highly recommend that you bring luggage with wheels.

Rolling rather than folding is a good technique for saving space and preventing wrinkles. One good traveler's tip is to pack bubble wrap in the empty spaces; it can be used to wrap fragile purchases for your

trip back to the US.

Do not pack anything valuable, fragile or perishable in checked luggage. Your passport should be on your person at all times and any valuable items and prescription drugs should be on your person or in carry on luggage.

SUGGESTED CLOTHING: Bring COMFORTABLE clothes suitable for movement and touring around that do not need ironing. Dressing in “layers” is a good plan. A jacket or vest with zip pockets can be indispensable. Loose comfortable clothes for doing Qigong will also be part of the items you’ll want to pack. Ladies, please plan on wearing comfortable pants for Qigong as skirts are not appropriate.

It will most likely be very warm in Hangzhou and Chengdu. It can also be quite warm during the daytime in Wudang , Qiyun and Juihua but it gets much cooler at night. It can also be very cool in the daytime if it is raining. A sweater and warm jacket will be fine.

Wash and wear clothes that do not require ironing are recommended for this trip. Fast drying items can be washed in your hotel room sink and dry overnight. Laundry services are available at some of the hotels, but tends to be quite expensive and we will not have time to wait for undelivered laundry.

Casual and modest dress remains our preference for traveling in China. (Hold back on the sleeveless tops and shorts. When visiting temples, at least have your shoulders covered.) Slacks and a shirt or sweater are most always appropriate attire.

A hat that will keep off sun or rain and windproof jacket with a warm under-layer, being the way to prepare for days that may be hot (in the 80’s) and humid, but with night time temperatures that are quite cool (in the 30’s to low 50’s).

SHOES. Good walking shoes, cushioned with tough non-skid soles, medium or low tops are fine unless you need the ankle support. Don’t bring heavy hiking boots, they are not appropriate for mountains with stone stairs cut into them. This is NOT wilderness hiking. Make sure shoes are broken in with plenty of toe room. You can get by with good tennis shoes, they are light and comfortable, unless it rains. We don’t expect a lot of rain, but it can happen.

SOCKS. Cotton for most of trip, with one or two pair of “smart wool” socks for hiking. Smart wool comes in light weights is machine washable, is not itchy, and available on the net or at sporting stores. Great for preventing blisters, which can develop with thin cotton socks climbing mountain stairs all day. The cotton gets wet from sweat and then rubs.

PACKING CHECK LIST – SUGGESTIONS OF THINGS TO INCLUDE

It would be good to pack as lightly as possible so that it won’t be difficult to move our baggage thru the various airports and hotels. Some hotels, train stations, and bus stations in China do not have elevators and so we need to carry our bags up the stairs. We try to stay in hotels that have elevators.

Plus you may want to save room for any purchases you make there. There some very interesting outdoor markets, in China, where you can haggle to your heart’s content.

Essential Items:

Wristwatch/smart phone is ESSENTIAL. You need a watch to meet group travel schedules for numerous bus departures, or after we scatter at a site with a time deadline for meeting again.

Travel alarm clock/smart phone (if you have trouble getting up). The hotels will have wakeup service in big cities.

Chargers for your devices

Money! See below.

Back Pack (one that is comfortable for you to wear and can accommodate what you want to pack) Electricity converter. Some things will work without a converter, but it is better to be safe than sorry.

Personal toiletries

Toilet tissue (the little travel size packages of Kleenex are a convenient size and shape to tuck in a pocket. In many parts of China, tissue in public rest rooms is non-existent.)

Wash and wear clothing – dress in “layers” to accommodate changing temperatures including, warm sunny days, cold nights, windy mountain conditions and rain.

Comfortable (well broken in) walking shoes

MONEY DOLLARS – YUAN - RMB

HOW MUCH MONEY DO I NEED? Mostly depends on your appetite for shopping. We suggest that you bring a **minimum** of \$600.00 in Yuan. We suggest more based upon Jessica’s last 3 trips to China. It is best to get the Yuan in the US from your bank before the trip. Changing money in China can be iffy. It is better to have an ATM card, but it may not work. Be sure to tell your bank in advance that you will be in China. Changing cash American dollars is a BIG hassle and we don’t recommend that you even attempt to do it.

You will want to let your credit card company know you will be in China, and also your bank. Some ATMs might accept your credit and debit cards, but some will not. Changing cash in China is a hassle and time-consuming.

SHOPPING. Usually people spend more than they planned, as there are lots of nice crafts in China: silk clothes, paintings, calligraphy, jade, bronze, etc. We will have several opportunities to shop in China, ranging from quaint street bazaars to big stores. Larger stores and airport shops will take credit cards, and also take a big profit on you. You will need yuan for shopping at the street bazaars where bargaining on the price of an object is both a game and an art. General rule: offer one third of what they ask...then enjoy the process. You will need Yuan for any snacks or treats and for the occasional meal that is not included in the price of the trip.

Tips are included in your trip price, but you may want to tip for if you feel someone has been extra helpful..

You may also need some mad money, and some emergency money, in case you miss the bus and need to grab a taxi.

Miscellaneous Items:

face-cloth and soap (Chinese hotels do not have face-cloths, if you need one, take your own)

high absorbent travel towel

personal toiletries packed in zip lock plastic bags

toothbrush, toothpaste, floss

chap stick
extra set of luggage keys
moist towelettes in packages
language dictionary and phrase book or Translation App for your phone.
photocopies of important documents
diary or journal to record your trip experiences
lightweight rain poncho
small fold up umbrella
hat to keep off sun or rain
sunscreen
extra zip-lock bags, of different sizes, useful for organizing things
your favorite snacks
tea, instant cocoa & instant coffee (hot boiled water will be available in your hotel room)
calculators so that you can effectively bargain at stores, shops, stands etc.

Suggestions of medical supplies:

aspirin or aspirin substitute
vitamins
bowel regulators for diarrhea
bowel regulators for constipation (common problem at beginning of trip after long plane ride)
bandaids
your usual antibiotic
your usual cold medication
antiseptic spray/wipes
copy of medical history, prescription duplicates, extra eyeglasses, dentures
Emergency or Airborne to boost your immune system.

MEALS IN CHINA: Meals in China, if you are with a group, tend to be served family style, with a wide variety of delicious dishes to choose from, including vegetable only dishes. Be prepared to use chop sticks. (You may wish to bring your own fork.) Hot tea is available with lunch and dinner. Coffee is not usually available; if you want coffee, bring your own instant (although we will try to provide pour-over, availability may be limited or varied). The small drip style travel coffee maker that fits over a coffee cup works well. Hot boiled water will be available. Chinese breakfasts tend to consist of boiled eggs, steamed buns, congee (porridge) and pickled vegetables. If you need some sweet pastry or jam, bring your own.

The food in China is very different than American Chinese food – so much more delicious and varied. We always feel that I am eating our way across China! You will get so spoiled eating food there that it can actually become difficult eating in American Chinese restaurants!

SPECIAL MEAL REQUESTS: If you are a vegetarian or have special dietary requests please let us know as soon as possible.

DRINKING WATER : Do not drink tap water in China. **Do not even brush your teeth with it.** Hotel rooms will have electric tea kettles to boil water for making tea, etc. or thermoses of hot boiled water. You may wish to bring your own tea bags, instant cocoa powder or instant coffee. Do not drink water that does not come in a bottle with a seal on it. Do not drink beverages with ice.

INTERNET: Most hotels have a business center with internet access for a small fee. There are also internet cafe's in many locations in the cities.

PUBLIC TOILETS You may encounter some public toilets in China that are not up to international standards. A few could be old-fashioned "hole in the ground" variety where you crouch and aim. Public toilets in hotels and most restaurants have Western-style fixtures.

Always carry extra tissue with you. Wet towlette packets are also recommended, as there may not be running water to wash hands at all public facilities.

MEDICAL AND HEALTH: All visitors entering China are required to complete a Health Declaration card distributed by the cabin crew during the flight to China. Officially China does not issue entry visas to HIV carriers.

If you have health problems, please inform your trip leaders as soon as possible.

VACCINATIONS: Vaccinations are not required for travel to China except for travelers arriving from or via an infected area. It is up to individual travelers to do what they are most comfortable with and make their own choice to get vaccinations or not.

AIR TRAVEL/JET LAG TIPS: The flight to China will take about 12 and a half hours. Jetlag can be a challenge with its possible effect of weakening one's immune system by reversing night and day (12 hours time difference). This confuses the body until it reverses its biological clock. During this weakened period you are more susceptible to new bacteria in the food and water of China or latent (pre-existing) conditions in your body. Plus, trans-pacific plane travel can be stressful in itself: reduced oxygen and blood circulation during long flights take their toll.

Dehydration on long flights is the biggest problem. Take a water bottle, constantly drink. Try to drink at least 4 ounces of water per hour of flight time. Avoid alcohol, it dehydrates you and disperses your chi. Take a small spray bottle and mist face and arms regularly; it makes a huge difference, a little lavender in the water is nice.

Do Qigong at the airport just before getting on the plane. This improves chi circulation. We usually do some small movement qigong on the plane as well; at minimum take a regular hike every few hours around the plane aisles.

Get up early the first morning in China and absorb sunlight for 10-15 minutes to reset your hormonal clock. This may be difficult, but still go outside and get natural light. We will most likely be able to gather as a group to do morning Qigong together outdoors in a park, close by. Also eat a big breakfast the first morning, food also helps to reset biological your clock.