

5 TIPS TO MAKE TRAVELING TO CHINA EASIER

China is a destination full of contrasts. On one hand, Beijing with its millennial imperial buildings; on the other, Shanghai, with one of the most modern skylines in the world. Meanwhile, cities like Guilin feature breathtaking mountain landscapes. Wherever you are in China, one thing is for sure – you will not hear any language other than Chinese. English is a rarity there and even hotel and airport staff has little knowledge of the language. [Tourism-review.com](https://www.tourism-review.com) offers 5 tips how to make traveling to China much easier.

1. Don't leave your documents behind

If you speak Chinese, traveling to China will be a piece of cake for you. But those who do not know the local language may run into troubles when it comes to memorizing the characters and basic phrases. With that in mind, take all the important information of your trip with you written in Chinese: names, addresses and points of reference. It is almost impossible to get a cab, for instance, if you do not have the exact address of your destination written in Chinese characters. These notes will be extremely useful even when asking for directions on the street.

2. For hotel stays increase the credit card limit

The positive feature of Chinese hotel chains is that there are many lodging options in major cities, from cheap to luxury hotels – which, in general, are less expensive than the facilities of the same level in Brazil or in Europe. The truth is that opting to spend a little bit more to stay in good hotels has several advantages, from the structure of the place itself (most expensive establishments offer larger rooms than the tighter, standard Chinese model, in addition to a bar, sightseeing, pool,...) to the staff, who usually have a higher level of English proficiency.

However, to avoid running into trouble right at the check-in, the best option is to increase the card's limit before you decide to travel. More often than not, the hotel will ask you to lock a value almost as high as the room price itself as a security deposit, an amount that can only be unlocked after a few days or weeks. This is usually a standard in large cities and hotels.

3. Review the apps in your mobile phone

The Chinese internet is controlled through a firewall, which blocks access to several sites that are quite usual (and even necessary) in daily life. Google and social networks like Instagram and Facebook are only accessible in Hong Kong and Macao, or for anyone who relies on a VPN, a network that circumvents the blocking of such pages (which is illegal there). Those without a VPN need to conduct some adjustments in their apps and add some online dictionaries and translation apps.

The Google Translate app, for instance, will become your top favorite on your phone: even in the offline

mode, the app automatically translates the typed sentences into Chinese and is extremely useful when it comes to establishing communication with the locals. Many of them have similar apps on their phones, and they will even have fun in keeping the dialog alive, answering through their devices. Remember to download the app before the trip, since, when in the Chinese territory, the Google products are no longer available.

4. Mind the local calendar

This is true both for the seasons of the year and the peak and off seasons when traveling to China. For instance: if you want to travel in winter, it is worth knowing that it is very strenuous, particularly in the north, and that some of the top tourist attractions, like natural parks, mountains, rivers and lakes, may not be open or do not provide all the exuberance that you expect from them.

Regarding the peak and off seasons, be careful not to inadvertently book your trip for very crowded times. The period of the Chinese New Year, for instance, is a time of collective vacation that results in the biggest migration of mankind – that is when the highest number of Chinese decide to travel at the same time. Those who visit the country on any date close to this holiday can expect kilometer-long traffic jams and higher prices.

5. Prepare the itinerary as soon as possible

It is usual for many people to leave the details of the trip, like the exact routes, to the very last minute. Unfortunately, a trip to China does not allow much improvisation. First, because, to get the visa, the Chinese Consulate requires an already organized trip, with the address of each accommodation facility. And, secondly, because the distances between the cities are huge, the airplane tickets are expensive and the train tickets can be sold out, especially on holidays. Take advantage of this requirement of the Consulate and outline your itinerary well in advance, including the transport you have to make, the dates of each stretch, the best location of accommodation (close to a subway station or main attractions, in order to simplify your daily life in the city) and safeguard all your bookings.

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