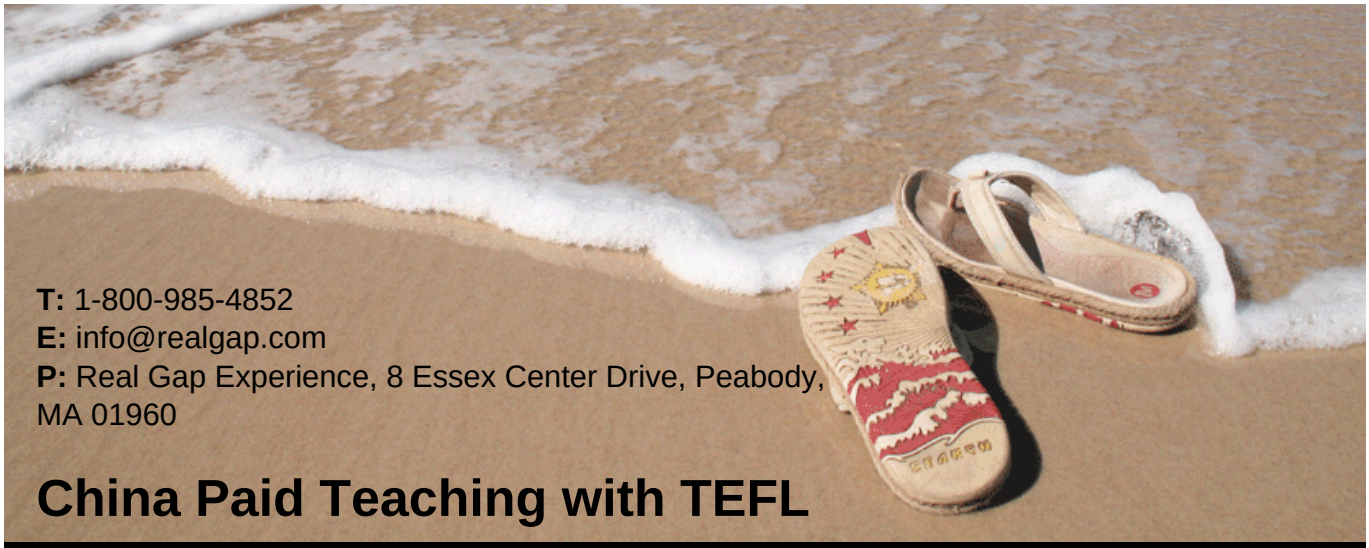

T: 1-800-985-4852
E: info@realgap.com
P: Real Gap Experience, 8 Essex Center Drive, Peabody, MA 01960

China Paid Teaching with TEFL

Adventure Relaxation Culture

Trip Name: China Paid Teaching with TEFL **Trip Code:** CHPT **Duration:** From 6 months

Trip Highlights

- A chance for ambitious and adventurous people who want to experience the 'real' China
- Get paid to teach English and learn about the Chinese language and culture
- Spend a month in bustling Beijing training for your TEFL
- Get to grips with the basics of the Chinese language
- Be an integral part of school life in China

Overview

Teaching English in China is a superb opportunity for those of you who want a challenge in a new, exciting environment. You'll get the chance to study Chinese, work as an English teacher and travel the country during the holidays.

Taking time out from study or embarking on a career break can be a daunting prospect so the chance to travel and earn money can be the ideal balance. As part of the teaching English in China programme, you will receive TEFL training in Beijing to help you get the most out of your teaching experience.

During your training you will also take part in Mandarin lessons and be offered help adapting to Chinese culture and customs. You will receive an allowance of 2000RMB per month once you start teaching and a completion bonus at the end of your placement.

Please note: The deadline for the January 2013 start date is the 10h December 2012. The deadline for the August 2013 start date is the 30th May 2013.

Destination Info

The country we know today as China actually derives from a long line of smaller civilisations dating back six millennia. China's influence on modern life is nothing short of remarkable having given the world a huge array of inventions such as paper, the compass, gunpowder and even pasta. The country is steeped in traditions and ancient practices and it is all just waiting to be discovered while you are in China teaching English.

China's rapid development over the last 20 years has helped transform it into a global economic super power, but its historic roots are here to stay. You only have to visit one of the many temples, the Great Wall or the Terracotta Army to see that!

Itinerary

This programme may not have a set itinerary, however our travel advisers are always on hand to answer any questions you may have about this trip.

The emphasis of this placement is teaching English and British culture. You might also be able to help out in music, history, sport, geography or science lessons. As part of your teaching duties in China you will be expected to plan your own lessons, keep attendance records, correct homework and assist in the administration of the school.

There will also be plenty of opportunities outside term time for you to explore China and discover more about this incredible country, its people and history.

The first four weeks will be spent in Beijing training for your TEFL and learning the language and culture of China. You'll spend this time with loads of other people from all over the world, all planning to teach and travel the country.

At the end of the training month you'll head on to teach in a school. The location could be anywhere in China although most placements are in the south of the country. The exact location and age of children you will be teaching is determined during your training weeks.

China Paid Teaching with TEFL

Teacher training (The English Language Company Certificate in TEFL) - Our intensive teacher training programme, delivered by the English Language Company, prepares you to be a confident and competent English teacher intern in China. There will be both theory and practical aspects to the programme. You will complete the majority of the practical part whilst at the school, and your certificate will be issued at the end of the first semester.

You will learn about English language teaching methodology, acquire practical classroom techniques, improve your own language awareness, observe classes in action and participate in teaching practice. By the end of the programme you should feel confident in your role as teacher intern at your school in China. You might find it helpful to bring a good English grammar book with you as well as an advanced Mandarin-English dictionary.

The timetable will vary according to times of Mandarin lessons, teaching practice classes. The above is an example of the timetable.

Leadership training - This component of the programme is designed to develop your communication and leadership skills, which will help with your role in schools.

China orientation - During this is part of the orientation you will find out about Chinese customs, behaviour, work culture, dress, food, history, geography and travel.

Mandarin lessons - Learn some basic Mandarin to help you with your everyday life in China.

Orientation to schools - Information will be provided on the expectations of the role you have in schools and the systems in place to assist you once placed in a school.

Cultural lessons - This will include Fun lessons on Chinese cultural pursuits, based on arts such as calligraphy, cooking and painting.

Excursions - We will go on several excursions to places of local interest.

Chinese New Year - During the training period, there will be a short break to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Activities will be organised with the local community as part of this very significant Chinese Festival.

The ELC Certificate in TEFL is delivered by the English Language Company; a school accredited in Sydney, Australia, for the purpose of teaching English as a second or foreign language.

The ELC Certificate in TEFL comprises two phases:

1. Theory and Teaching Practice – a full-time course over 4 weeks comprising a total of 108 hours of instruction, including both teaching methodology and teaching practice. This is a challenging course that prepares all participants for their role as a Teacher Intern.
2. Practical Experience – this is completed in the schools. All participants complete a practical assignment and receive a reference from the school. The ELC Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language is awarded at the conclusion of the practical component.

In order to successfully complete the training programme participants must:

- Attend all input sessions
- Attend all teaching practice (unless otherwise advised)
- Adequately prepare for teaching practice
- Complete and submit on time all assignments
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of English language teaching methodology
- Demonstrate competence in the use of basic classroom techniques
- Demonstrate good language awareness
- Behave cooperatively and constructively with colleagues and trainers
- Conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times
- Speak only English during core hours of training

It is expected that all candidates who make a concerted effort during the Training Programme will be able to succeed. However, all must realize that this will require a dedication to the programme, as it is a certified qualification.

Depending on the complementary qualifications held, the TEFL certificate and school reference would allow participants to work in other developing countries in the future.

All efforts are made to ensure that school allocation areas are made prior to your departure, according to your preference, however this is not always the case. This is also subject to change during the four-week training period.

Although the school and the age of children taught will vary, all of the placement schools are visited to ensure their suitability for participants.

The academic year is split into two semesters, with each term being approximately five months in duration with the first one starting in early September, and the second starting in February. This does vary though depending on the time of the Chinese New Year, which is usually from late January to late February. The term breaks are for six to eight weeks from July to August and four weeks from January to February. There is usually a one-week break in October and one around midyear which will be published at a later date by the Chinese government.

The School Placement
You will be advised of your placement prior to finishing your orientation and training. It is the schools that determine the placements through selection based on your application. Placements cannot be changed once approved. Participants applying together can be placed in the same school.

Teaching duties will vary from school to school, but as a general rule you should expect to be in the classroom for 20 hours per week as a teacher or teaching assistant. During school hours you are expected to stay at the school even if you are not teaching. There will also be preparation time, meetings and assessment as needed.

Typical duties include:

- The emphasis of teaching is on 'conversational English' and the culture of your country. Many teachers may teach English composition, reading and literature as well.

- Some teachers may also assist in courses in subject field such as music, history, geography, or science courses in some international schools, depending on your background and skill
- You may be expected to assist to write lesson plans, take attendance, correct homework and even assist in academic counselling if necessary
- Assist in the administration of the school and prepare materials for classroom teachers
- Even though the role is that of 'Teacher Intern' you can expect to take lessons by yourself

You will have the opportunity to nominate a region of China you would prefer – Northeast; North; Central East and South, although these cannot be guaranteed.

The Northeast includes Inner Mongolia, Jilin and Liaojing.
The North includes Beijing, Tianjin, Shanxi and Shaanxi.
Central East includes Shanghai, Nanjing, Huangzhou and Jiangsu Province.
The South includes the provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan, Sichuan, Yunan and Fujian.

There are three categories of teacher placement:

- Kindergarten
- Primary
- High school

You will be asked to choose your preference of placement, but these are not guaranteed.

Students are usually well behaved and keen to learn English and interact with foreigners. The range of English competencies amongst students will also vary from beginner to intermediate levels.

Don’t forget that this is also an amazing opportunity to experience a new culture, explore a country and get to make new friends. You will get to meet new not only at the school but also through the teaching network. Our in-country team will keep in touch with you throughout your teaching placement to check all is well and to invite you to social gatherings that they arrange giving you a great opportunity to catch-up with your fellow teachers.

Don't forget to also use some of your free time to try and explore some of this amazing country and see more of its iconic sites. Take a trip down to the walled city of Xi’an and see the Terracotta Warriors, the stunning scenery in Guilin, and of course take the opportunity to see a Panda with your own eyes. China has so much to see and do that you will be hard pushed to run out of new things to do.

Accommodation

During the training weeks you will live in shared apartments with 2 to 4 people, also training with you.

Your placement accommodation will vary between schools as each has a different format. You will have your own room and will usually have access to shared communal facilities in the school. By western standards, the accommodation may be considered basic, but by Chinese standards the accommodation provided to foreign teachers is spacious and comparatively of high standard.

Please note: The apartments during the training are single sex. We are, therefore, unable to place couples in the same accommodation during this time.

Programme Services and Facilities

Internet

Throughout China, Internet access is widely available. All villages have a place with cheap Internet access, usually a large Internet café with a broadband high-speed connection. There is Internet access available at most of the schools.

There are also several large Internet cafés in the town. For one hour it will cost you approximately two Yuan.

Telephone

The international telephone access code for China is +86.

To place an outgoing, direct dialled international call, dial +44 for the UK, +49 for Germany, followed by the telephone number. For example to call Real Gap Experience dial +44 1892 516164 / +49 69 222226 475.

If you are looking to use a payphone to contact people at home whilst you are in China, your cheapest option would be to get an international phone card. Public phones are reasonably easy to come across, but your best bet is probably an Internet Cafe - most will have phones dedicated for international calls.

Your mobile handset should work in China – however you should check this with your provider. It is cheaper to buy a SIM card when you are there but you will need to check with your provider that your phone is unlocked and will accept foreign SIM cards. You can buy telephone cards for international calls and there are often special discounts on offer.

Laundry

There are laundry facilities available at the majority at the schools where placements are available. If there are not facilities where you are placed, then there will be some in your local town for a small charge.

Electricity

All accommodation has plug sockets for you to use.

Meals

During the training you will eat in the university canteen. At the school meals are served in a dining hall. There is usually a separate staff dining hall. Western meals are not served – and you should try to become competent in using chopsticks as soon as possible! Chinese food is fresh, but milk, potatoes, bread and coffee are rare. Rice and tea are staples, but every meal offers a variety of dishes.

Chinese meals are similar throughout the day - breakfast, lunch and dinner will have liitle to differentiate them. Western food can be purchased in the cities, but the quality may vary and it is relatively expensive.

What's Included

- Four weeks of teacher training including TEFL certificate
- Orientation in Beijing
- Paid teaching placement after TEFL completion
- Payment of 2000RMB/month
- All accommodation
- 24-hour emergency service
- The visa arrangement which will be processed by our team in China
- Arrival airport transfer
- Food - except for weekends and school holidays

What's Not Included

- Flights
- Insurance
- External activities
- Your F Visa
- Spending money

Is This Trip For You?

Programme Requirements

- Completed education to at least A-Levels (or equivalent)
- Good English grades at school
- Appropriate personal qualities (maturity, flexibility, ability to cope with challenges, good communication skills)
- Travel experience is preferred
- A range of hobbies and interests
- Copies of highest academic qualifications
- Good health
- No police record
- Understanding of cultural sensitivity
- Some work experience- either paid or voluntary
- Experience of working with children, such as babysitting, teaching, coaching - not essential but preferred

Additional Information

Visa

Approximately one month prior to your departure, we will send you a visa invitation letter and JW202 form for your placement. You will need to take this visa invitation letter and JW202 form, along with your passport, two passport-sized photos and your visa form to your nearest Chinese embassy or consulate where they will issue you with the first part of your F-visa. While you are in China, our partners will update and extend your visa.

Please note: The cost of your F-visa is not included in the price.

Wages

The allowance is 2000RMB per month (There are about 11RMB to a British pound) and is tax-free. Your allowance can be paid either by cash or directly in to your bank account. You will receive a bonus for the completion of your contract, which is RMB2500 for the first semester and RMB4000 for the second semester. The allowance is approximately the same as a Chinese teacher would receive.

Your allowance will cover basic costs, but will not provide for 'savings' opportunities. It is expected that all participants will require additional savings to draw on, with the cost dependent on the amount of additional travel and entertainment expected.

What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore you may not need all the listed items on your travels, nor is it exhaustive.

Personal Admin

- Photocopies of important papers such as passport, airline tickets and insurance documents

General

- Digital camera & batteries
- Day bag / rucksack – a waterproof cover is also useful ;
- A torch
- Plastic hooks are handy to hang things on
- Board games & playing cards for free time
- Diary – you will have so many amazing experiences to remember
- CD walkman and speakers and a variety of CDs
- Plastic bags
- Snacks
- Towel
- Water bottle
- Binoculars
- Pocket-knife
- You will need two folders and two notebooks and stationary for class

Clothing

- A range of clothing depending on the season(s) you will be there
- Teaching clothes should be smart and conservative, so no sleeveless tops or jeans
- A hat to protect you from the sun
- Rain coat
- Beachwear

Medical Kit

- Small medical kit containing plasters, medicine for diarrhoea, head ache tablets and any medication you will need. ;
- Malaria tablets if advised by your GP
- Mosquito repellent
- Contraception including condoms
- Tissues
- Biological soap
- Antibacterial soap gel (does not need water to rinse off)
- Travel wash for clothes

Minimum Age

Minimum age is 18 years old, maximum age 50 years old.

Flights

Please do not book your flight until you have received your pre-acceptance letter confiriming your place on the programme. Once you have this letter you can book your flights but we advise that you do not book these until you have your visa granted (approximately one month before you depart).

Your flight to China should arrive at Beijing Airport on your programme start date.You should book a flexible return ticket as your end date will not be confirmed until you are in China. A provisional programme end date has been added, please note this will not be confirmed until you are in-country.

To book your flights, please contact your Travel Advisor who can look into the best flight quote for you.

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your online account or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

FAQs

1. **How much do I get paid per month?**
   The monthly teaching allowance is approx £180 to £200 depending on exchange rates.

2. **Can I be placed at the same school as my friend/partner?**
   Yes – you can request this upon booking and all participants are placed with at least one other Western teacher.

3. **I don't have A levels, can I apply?**
   Yes, if you have an equivalent education certificate to show you studied to at least 18 years old.

4. **Who is the TEFL certified by?**
   The comprehensive 108-hour TEFL is certified by the English Language Company in Sydney, Australia.

5. **I'm 18, can I apply?**
   Yes, mature 18 year olds with experience are considered.

6. **What happens if I don't fulfil all the criteria during training?**
   During the course, if your trainer believes that you are failing to meet any of these criteria, you will be issued with a warning letter. If your performance subsequently does not improve in this area, you will not pass the course and will not be placed in a school.

DBS

This trip requires a Police Check to be carried out - please contact us for further information on how to do this.

Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

You will be assigned a personal travel advisor who will co-ordinate your program with you. Feel free to contact them at any time before you go, or when you are on your travels. They will provide you with competent assistance and help with any questions or advice you may need during your stay.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

Money Matters

In China the currency is the Renminbi Yuan (RMB or CNY, symbol ¥), which is subdivided into 10 Jiao which is in turn equal to 10 Fen. Coins come in denominations of 1 Jiao, 1 and 5 Yuan and 1, 2 and 5 Fen. Notes come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 Yuan.

Credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard, AmEx can be used at upmarket hotels, restaurants, supermarkets and department stores. ATMs that accept credit cards are mainly in large cities at branches of the Bank of China and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, though a fee may be charged.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant 3.23 $

Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) 1.28 $
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) 0.52 $
Water (0.33 litre bottle) 0.28 $

(Prices quoted in US Dollar)

Passports and Visas

You should ensure that you have a full passport that is valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information provided below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

For stays of up to 30 days, citizens of the European Union, the USA, Australia and New Zealand must obtain a Tourist (type L) visa in advance of travel. Visas can be obtained from your local embassy and must be used within 3 months of issue.

To work in China you must first receive an invitation from a Chinese business/institution and be eligible for an employment permit. You will require a working (type F) visa, which can be used for a stay of up to 6 months. For more details about specific requirements and information on passports, please visit http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/lsyw/chivisa/

All other nationalities please contact your local embassy for further information.

Cultural Considerations

China is becoming more and more liberal all the time, so, especially in the major urban areas, you do not need to dress too conservatively. Bear in mind that you will get stared at, even more so if you go out and about in something outlandish!

This may happen, more so in rural areas and you might even find yourself being asked for a photo! This is not meant in a hostile manner and although it may be annoying, just try to ignore it or feel flattered that they are taking such an interest in you.

Looking scruffy will not go down well, especially in restaurants and hotel check-ins. The best way to gain respect is to make an effort with your appearance.

Spitting is not considered to be anti-social in China. It may seem disgusting, but there isn't really anything you can do except ignore it- they probably think we are disgusting for something we do that we think is completely normal. Anyway, you'll get used to it… eventually!

"Saving Face" is an important concept in China which is based on social standings; so pointing out things negatively and criticising will cause immense humiliation for the person on the receiving end. It also means that getting stressed and shouting at someone will get you absolutely nowhere. If you need to be negative towards someone, make sure that you do it in a polite but firm manner, to keep embarrassment to a minimum.

When visiting markets and street vendors you will need to bargain for the item you wish to purchase. Generally when the vendor spots you are a foreigner the price will shoot up, so try offering a price about 70% lower and work from there. Don't get too aggressive and treat it as a bit of fun- you're only going to be arguing over pennies! This is also the vendor's living so paying that little bit extra will make a greater difference to them than it will to you.

Religion

Many religions are represented in China but generally the most popular are Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Chinese Folk religions, ancestor veneration and the worship of localised deities. Muslims, Jews and Christians also have a small representation.

Smoking, Alcohol

Smoking and drinking is acceptable in China and readily available. However, please respect other people. Smoking is not permissible in volunteer apartments or the host families' homes. Drinking is only permissible in moderation and must not impact upon any volunteer work you undertake. While we want you to have fun in your free time, antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated.

Bathroom Facilities

You will experience a range of different shower and toilet facilities. Unless you are staying in a hotel you will rarely have hot water. The cool water takes a little getting used to but I'm sure you'll find it refreshing after a hot and humid day. Toilets will be a combination of western and Asian. Remember to put all toilet tissue in the bin provided and not in the toilet.

Whist on excursions you will notice that many places do not have a western toilet and will have a typical Asian toilet; again this is all part of the Asian culture. Also, many places do not have soap in the bathrooms. It is a good idea to take a small bottle of soap gel and keep it in your day bag. This is an antibacterial gel that you don't need to rinse off. These are available in chemists in the travel section.

Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

Safety

As in most countries there are people who try to take advantage of tourists. The following advice is intended to help you keep safe:

- Always keep your personal items such as passport, money and camera with you and in a safe place. You can buy mini padlocks to prevent people from going into your day sack without your permission
- Always walk around in groups
- Never go out alone after dark
- Stick with the escorted trips. If you do go out in the evening unescorted, you do so at your own risk. Please tell the co-ordinators where you are going and what time you will be back.
- Please do not get into fights or arguments with locals. We cannot guarantee your safety and it could provoke future attacks on other travellers
- Please do not leave your drinks unattended and do not accept drinks from strangers

We advise that you check your government's advice before travelling abroad. For UK, American and Australian customers please see the relevant links below;

UK: www.fco.gov.uk
USA: www.travel.state.gov
Australia: www.smartraveller.gov.au

ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if you card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing 'traps' in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

If your card is confiscated or you are concerned that your card has been tampered with, please report immediately to the bank or cancel your card.

This information is not intended to scare you. Unfortunately, bad things can happen, as they can do in any country and we want you to be prepared. We want you to stay safe and have a good time.

The majority of the locals are friendly, warm and hospitable people who love meeting our travellers. Please be friendly, respectful and stay aware and you will have a great time.

Language Guide

Mandarin is spoken by about 70% of the population, but Cantonese is also an official language. As it is such a huge country, China also has hundreds and hundreds of different dialects.

We suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

English - *Mandarin*
Hello! - *Ni hao!*
Nice to see you! - *Hin gow shing jian dow ni!*
Goodbye/See you - *Zai jian*
What's your name? - *Ni jiao shen me ming zi?*
Who is he? - *Ta shi shui?*
How old are you? - *Ni dwo da le?*
Where is…., please? - *Qing wen…., jai nar?*
Please kindly send/drive me to X - *Qing song wo dow X..*
How much is that bag? - *Na gur bow dwo shao qian?*
I'll take this one - *Je ge wo yow le*
Thank you - *Xie xie*
You're welcome - *Bu ker chi/bu yong xie*
I'm sorry - *Dui bu qi*

That's all right - *Mei guan shi*
One - *Yee*
Two - *Er*
Three - *San*
Four - *Si*
Five - *Woo*
Six - *Liu*
Seven - *Qi*
Eight - *Ba*
Nine - *Jiu*
Ten - *Shi*

Food & Drink

Everyone knows Chinese food, or thinks they do anyway! Just like with India you will find that the Chinese food we have here and the actual Chinese cuisine are somewhat different. They also have some slightly strange dishes too if you fancy something a ittle different – (like chicken's feet and river snails)! Due to China's vast size there are many regional variations, making for an extremely diverse cuisine.Some areas go for subtle flavours whereas others go for very strong, somewhat odd mixtures but all are united in terms of fresh vegetables, rice and noodles. Dim Sum, which means 'little eats' are very popular all over China, made up of buns and pancakes, and dumplings are generally eaten for breakfast!The best place to get authentic Chinese snacks is from small vending stalls on the streets, which are also good for breakfast! Western food is pretty widely available, especially in the more touristy locations. In Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong you'll even be able to get your Starbucks coffee fix!

Of course, the main difference on the Chinese dinner table is chopsticks instead of a knife and fork, but that's only superficial. The real difference is that in the West, you have your own plate of food, while in China the dishes are placed in the middle of the table and everyone shares. If you are being treated to a formal dinner and particularly if the host thinks you're in the country for the first time, he will do the best to give you a taste of many different types of dishes.

The meal usually begins with a set of at least four cold dishes, to be followed by the main courses of hot meat and vegetable dishes. Soup will then be served (unless in Guangdong style restaurants) to be followed by staple food ranging from rice, noodles to dumplings. If you wish to have your rice to go with other dishes, you should say so in good time, for most of the Chinese choose to have the staple food last or have none of them at all.

Perhaps one of the things that surprises a western visitor most is that some of the Chinese hosts like to put food into the plates of their guests. At formal dinners, there are always "public" chopsticks and spoons for this purpose, but some hosts may use their own chopsticks. This is a sign of genuine friendship and politeness. It is always polite to eat the food and if you do not eat it, just leave the food on the plate.

People in China tend to over-order food, as it is embarrassing if all the food is consumed. When you have had enough, just say so. Or you will always overeat!

Public Holidays

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. However, although businesses and government offices are closed on public holidays, tourist attractions and shops

are almost never closed. The main impact on the tourist of these holidays is the increased competition for travel and accommodation from Chinese who use long weekends to get away from the big city.

To view a list of the public holidays for China, please see the link below:

www.timeanddate.com/holidays/china/

Weather

The best times to visit China tend to be in the spring, March and April and in the Autumn, September and October in the lower plains, whereas the higher altitude areas are best between June and September. Although daytime temperatures may be reasonable, between 20C to 30C, the nights can still be really cold. China is such a vast country that it is worth bearing in mind that northern and southern areas will have completely different climates, so it is best to research the area you are going to, rather than the country as a whole. The south is subtropical with the temperatures in Yunnan ranging from 20°C in the winter to 29°C in the Summer, while Beijing's climate in the north ranges from 1°C to 31°C.

Time

China is 8 hours ahead of GMT

Electricity

In China the electric system is 220 Volts and frequency 50 Hertz. Outlets in China generally accept 2 types of plug:

Flat blade plug

or

V-shaped flat prongs

Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of reommended travel advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

Phone: 1-800-985-4852
Email: info@realgap.com
Post: Real Gap Experience, 8 Essex Center Drive, Peabody, MA 01960
Web: www.realgap.com