

# The Learning Adventure

## Pre-Departure Summary

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# The Learning Adventure

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## INFORMATION OF SCHOOL:

Organisation Name	
Trip Leader Name	
China Link School Details and Contact	
Mobile Phone Number With Group	
Guide in each location and phone number	
Total Number Travelling	
Number of Teachers	
Number of Students	
Arrival in China Date	
Departure from China Date	

## IMPORTANT DATES:

XX/XX/XX	Payments (may be multiple)
3 month before travel	Risk Assessments shared with the school
10 weeks before travel	Pre-departure Summary to be checked and confirmation sent to The Learning Adventure by school
2-4 weeks before travel	Pre-departure phone call with The Learning Adventure
XX/XX/XX	Arrival in China

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## CHINA ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE FLIGHT DETAILS:

INBOUND FLIGHT/TRAIN		
Flight/Train Number	Departure city and time	Arrival city and time
OUTBOUND FLIGHT/TRAIN		
Flight/Train Number	Departure city and time	Arrival city and time

### Check-in Procedure

For a group check-ins such as this, we suggest to arrive at the airport at least 3 hours prior to departure. Please present passports at the check-in desk in order to be issued your boarding passes. Please ensure you are aware of luggage allowances and have prepared all required tickets, passport and visas in advance.

### What to expect with a long-haul flight?

Long-haul flights can be a doddle with a few tricks to smooth the journey.

- Drink plenty of water, flying dehydrates you so it's good to get plenty of water top-ups. It can be advisable to bring a lip balm or small moisturizer (don't forget the 100ml limit on liquids) in your hand luggage in case you get dry skin too.
- Go for a walk every couple of hours – it's a nice change to stretch your legs and get the blood

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moving around your body again

- If you find it hard to sleep with light and sound, it is advisable to bring an eye mask and ear plugs. Many airlines supply these as part of their service.
- If you get cold easily, bring a jumper for the flight. Airlines normally supply blankets but sometimes people find it a bit chilly without a jumper.
- Plan your sleep during the journey with time differences and landing times in mind. For example, if your flight lands into China in the morning (China time) its best to try and get as much shut-eye as possible on the flight so you are ready to hit the ground running, even if that means going to sleep earlier than you would in your home country time.
- Other things to consider packing in your hand luggage: toothbrush and toothpaste, reading materials or other things to keep you entertained, boiled sweets to suck if you don't like your ears popping.

## WHAT TO EXPECT IN CHINA?

- **Pollution:** Pollution is not as bad as you might think! Most days are clear with the occasional grey sky. The Learning Adventure monitors the pollution levels for every trip in China but so far we have never had to cancel any outdoor activities.
- **Number of people:** China is a large country and has many people. Most major tourist destinations can be busy, but as long as you stick with the group and don't wander off on your own without telling anyone then it won't be a problem.
- **Different habits:** There may be some local habits that are different from what you are used to. For example, some westerners find spitting a little unpleasant but it's important to remember that every country has its own habits and cultural differences and there is no 'right' or 'wrong' in these situations. It might also be important to reflect on our own culture and remember that there are plenty of habits Chinese people often find unpleasant when traveling to Western countries (blowing your nose into a tissue and putting the used tissue in your pocket is one example...)
- **Staring/Photo-taking:** If your group is mostly non-Asian, expect to have many Chinese people stare at you! This will happen less in the bigger cities but may happen at some of the main tourist sites where there are Chinese people from other parts of China who are on holiday too and are not used to seeing foreigners (they may even have **never** seen a non-Asian person). Staring is not considered rude in China and it is out of curiosity more than anything else. For many folks hailing from rural parts of China, the only foreigners they have seen have been in adverts or on TV... imagine if you saw a celebrity on the street, you would probably stare at them too!
- **Water:** We recommend you don't drink the tap water in China. The Learning Adventure provides

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plenty of bottled water so ensure you drink that and you won't have any problems.

- Safety: Crime levels are very low in China and China is a relatively safe country. At the same time, however, pickpockets operate everywhere in the world and we recommend that students pay attention to their belongings in all tourist sites as well as ensuring they stay with the group unless explicitly told otherwise.

## **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

Please note that it is your sole responsibility to bring the correct travel documentation for valid and legal travel within Mainland China. The below information has been updated as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 and is intended to be used only as a reference. The ultimate authority on travel regulations lie only with the national governing body and The Learning Adventure cannot be held liable for any problems that arise as a result of travel regulations and applications of local law. If you are unsure of the validity of your travel documents, please feel free to ask your local embassy or email us at [schooltrips@thedragontrip.com](mailto:schooltrips@thedragontrip.com) where we can refer you to the official governing body that will have the final say in regards to the validity of your travel documents for your trip.

## **PASSENGER INFORMATION:**

Please make sure to fill in all the information correctly as any errors in this section can result in passengers not being allowed to board flights and trains. The Learning Adventure assumes no liability for costs incurred as a result of being provided incorrect passenger information. Please also take note of any special dietary requirements, allergies, or medical conditions and make sure we get all we need to know.

If you have previously given old passport details to The Learning Adventure, please make sure we will get an updated one as soon as you get it and also that the old passport or a photocopy (if the old passport is not available) is brought to China while travelling.

## **GROUPS TRAVELLING INTERNATIONALLY & GROUP VISAS:**

Most nationalities need a visa to travel in China, please make sure that you have a valid visa for travel. The Learning Adventure will provide you a visa letter if you apply for individual visa. If you

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are processing visas with the assistance of The Learning Adventure please get in contact with us directly regarding this.

If you are applying for group visa through us, here are some important notes that we would like to share with you.

- It is your responsibility to keep your original group visa in a safe place and only take it out while passing the customs. If you lose it you have trouble exiting and entering the border.
- The group Visa was issued according to the itinerary you have provided, if you want to change your itinerary and stay in China longer, please check and make sure your visa is valid during your stay in China as well as let us know about this.
- We will suggest you to prepare two photocopies of your group visa. Normally passengers will be divided into several group visas and there will be at least one adult in each group. Number of groups will depends on number of adults, for example, if there are 3 teachers and 30 students, on each group visa, there will be 1 teacher and 10 students. But sometimes this differs.
- When crossing the border, please let the 1st person on each of the group visa list hand over both the photocopy and the original visa, the customs will inspect the original one and the passport of everyone on the group visa, and then stamp on both the original one and the photocopy one, they will keep the photocopy and give the original one back to the last person on each group visa. Please make sure you get the original one back when the custom finishes checking and have a check if there is stamp on it. When checking in the hotel/hostel, please show them the original visa, but do not let them keep your original visa. The other photocopy will be a tract if you lose the original one by accident.
- You don't need to fill in the landing card as you travel in China with group visa.
- If you have any question regarding visa in china, please do not hesitate to contact us. Urgent Contact Numbers: China +86 139 9624 8549 China or UK mobile No. : +44 7853885657

## ***HONG KONG AND TAIWANESE RESIDENTS/CITIZENS TRAVELLING WITHIN MAINLAND CHINA:***

If you are a Chinese, Taiwanese or Hong Kong resident/national and will be travelling on your ID card or travel permit please make sure this is brought and that this document is within the validity period. A Hong Kong ID card is **not** valid for travel or checking in to accommodations within

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Mainland China. The Ministry of Public Security does **not** allow Hong Kong permanent residents to travel to the mainland with SAR passports. Likewise, The Republic of China passport is **not** considered as a valid travel document by the People's Republic of China.

Holders of the Home Return Permit **are** able to use this for travel within Mainland China for all purposes within the validity of their travel document, regardless whether the point of origin is Hong Kong, Macau, or overseas.

Many, but not all, residents of Hong Kong are dual Chinese nationals and British Nationals (Overseas) (BN(O)s). The PRC Government does **not** recognise BN(O) passports issued to Hong Kong residents of Chinese descent. They cannot use their BN(O) passports to enter Mainland China before or after the handover. If a person in Hong Kong is a British citizen but not a Chinese national, they can **only** use a British passport affixed with a Chinese visa as a valid document for travel.

Finally, dual citizenship is **not** recognized by Mainland China. If you have been registered within Mainland China as Chinese citizen and possess a Mainland China ID card, please bring the Mainland China ID card as your document of travel within Mainland China. A passport of any other nation than that of the People's Republic of China is **only** valid for travel if it contains a visa for travel within Mainland China and is within the validity dates.

## **PRC CITIZENS TRAVELLING TO HONG KONG:**

If travelling to Hong Kong, Hong Kong authorities accept either ROC passports or Mainland Travel Permits for Taiwan Residents to enter Hong Kong. For ROC passport holders, a Pre-arrival Registration along with a printout copy is required while the ROC passport is inspected.

Under current arrangements, Mainland residents who wish to visit Hong Kong are required to obtain an EEP and an appropriate exit endorsement from the relevant Public Security Bureau Office. A Mainland China ID is **not** valid for travel to Macao or Hong Kong and **must** obtain an EEP. In general, a Mainland resident who is in possession of a valid EEP bearing a valid exit endorsement may be landed in Hong Kong as a visitor, with a limit of stay in accordance with the

exit endorsement, provided that normal immigration requirements are met. The number of journeys to Hong Kong will be stated in the exit endorsement, i.e. single-journey, double-journey or multiple-journey.

## **ITINERARY:**

*Please note occasional changes are made to itineraries prior and during a trip*

## **INCLUSIONS:**

## **SUGGESTED MEETING WITH PARENTS AND STUDENTS:**

We recommend the lead teacher hosts a meeting with students and parents prior to departure. During the meeting the lead teacher can provide the following information to students:

- Trip outline
- Packing lists
- Vaccination requirements
- Behavioral expectations
- A member of the Learning Adventure team can be available via skype, phone or in person to answer any questions the lead teacher may be unsure of.

## **PRICE AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE:**

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Visa payment - £xxx per person on group visa, £xxx per UK passport for individual visa (other nationalities will be different, in the event of any change caused by the embassy/visa center, visa payment will be adjusted accordingly)

## **ACTIVITIES:**

## **ACCOMMODATION:**

They have been specially chosen for being very appropriate for school groups. Please see initial accommodation details below. Occasionally, due to unforeseen circumstances, changes do take place prior to departure and you will be informed of this as soon as this becomes apparent.

Please note: Most hostels do not have private bath/toilets within the dormitory room. Most private single/twin rooms do have private bath/toilets within the room. Please make sure students are prepared for using the public shower facilities if your itinerary includes hostel or dormitory accommodations.

## **TRANSPORTATION:**

In each destination, we use private transportation, which is air-conditioned and fully licensed and insured (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary). Where possible, we walk between attractions and, on occasion, take public transport. We use trains and internal flights where stated in the itinerary. Unless otherwise stated on the itinerary.

## **Night Train:**

## **Policy:**

## **Soft sleeper:**

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Most of the group bookings will be for “soft sleeper” trains. Soft sleepers have four beds in one cabin with a door, and typically 8/9 cabins in one train carriage, therefore 32/36 beds in total. However, please note occasionally on some routes this differs.

The Learning Adventure policy states that male students and female students are in separate cabins. We try our best to ensure private cabins for students. However occasionally we may need to swap beds with Chinese nationals on the train to ensure this (a common practice), and occasionally on popular trains it may not be possible.

For teachers, male and female teachers may be placed together with Chinese nationals and guides, and we will try to accommodate teachers as close to student cabin as possible. If you have any issues with this policy and would like to buy extra beds to try and have private cabin also for teachers, this will incur additional charges.

### *Hard sleeper:*

Regarding “hard sleeper” trains, hard sleepers have 6 beds with no door, and typically 10 to 11 cabins in one carriage, therefore 60 to 66 beds in total. However, please note occasionally on some routes this differs. On hard sleeper trains we do not buy extra beds as these are extremely popular with Chinese nationals and therefore harder to arrange the group to be placed together.

However please understand that the Chinese train system is very complicated and is very popular method of travel, therefore the tickets are booked very quickly, and so occasionally the group is more spread out or rooms may be mixed slightly. However, The Learning Adventure always attempts to abide by the above policy and put the safety of the students at the foremost thinking. Ultimately the night train is a great experience and students enjoy it, as well as saving the expense of a night’s accommodation.

### **Other notes:**

Both hard sleeper and soft sleepers have bathrooms but no showers. Luggage is stored in your cabin and students/teachers should be responsible for it. And also, after the train starts, a train

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staff member will come over to all passengers using sleeper to collect your tickets and give you a card, then about 15-30mins before the train arrives at your destination, the staff member will come over again return your ticket and collect the card back.

## **FOOD:**

We go to different places for nearly every meal apart from breakfasts, in restaurants that have been pre-approved by a Learning Adventure representative. We order in Chinese style, with lots of dishes in the center of the table which everybody helps themselves to with chopsticks.

We have a lot of experience of ordering Chinese dishes that appeal to international tastes, but we do also usually include a number of simple Western meals (for example Mcdonald's) during the trip, as otherwise, just Chinese food for the whole trip can be a big adjustment for some people.

We provide free bottled drinking water during the trip.

Please ensure that the Learning Adventure has been made aware of all allergies of travellers in your group to ensure our guides can try to accommodate these.

## **How to use chopsticks:**

Most people in China use chopsticks when eating their food. If you want to practice before your trip, get two pens (or anything else a similar shape to chopsticks) and follow the pictures below...

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## How to Use Chopsticks



### Step 1

Rest one chopstick in between the thumb and forefinger of your main hand. Keep it steady with the tip of your ring finger.

### Step 2

Hold the second chopstick like you would a pen and grip firmly with your thumb, index and middle fingers.



### Step 3

The secret to using chopsticks is to keep the bottom chopstick still and just move the top one only.

### Step 4

Keep the thumb still, but move the index and middle finger to open and close the chopsticks. Now try and pick something up.



### PACKING LISTS:

*We advise you to pack light. In our experience, people travelling for the first time bring a lot of unnecessary equipment with them, which ends up sitting in a bag untouched throughout the trip, and makes life difficult for the traveller and the drivers and guides who have to put luggage on and*

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*off the coach. Generally smart clothes are not required, even for the school visits. Any student with a bag over 15kg will be fined with eating a chicken foot, or 'smelly tofu' for the vegetarians!*

This is just rough weather guidance. Please kindly keep close track on the weather report when it is closer to the trip. However, please understand that weather is not 100% predictable, so we suggest all passengers also bring some warm/cool clothes with them just in case.

We recommend you bring the following:

## **Main bag and a small day pack.**

We leave our big bags at the accommodation, so you'll need to keep your valuables with you in a day pack or give it to your teacher. For your big bag, a suitcase or hold-all will be fine.

(Review items in packing list carefully, make sure they are appropriate for the **destination**, **duration**, and **season** of the trip.)

## **Necessities**

- Passport with visa
- Details of emergency numbers
- Chinese currency (optional, but we recommend you to prepare in advance as it is not very convenient for any student to get separated from the group to take out money)
- Photocopies of passport photo page and passport visa page, bankcard (optional) and any personal insurance policies taken out.

## **Toiletries**

- Insect repellent – a must for summer months
- Hand sanitizer
- Packets of toilet paper – not provided in public toilets!
- Sun cream and after sun - another must for spring or summer
- Moisturiser – useful for travelling during the cold, dry winter
- Any medication you need and a list of the medication you take

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- Deodorant and tampons are hard to find in China so please pack accordingly

## Clothes

- Trainers/sport shoes/sensible walking shoes
- Walking trousers
- Jeans (or knee-length skirts or shorts for hot weather)
- A towel (normally not provided in hostels/guesthouses/farmhouse)
- T-shirts
- Jumpers or fleeces
- Sunglasses
- Waterproof Rain coat.
- Sun hat/Winter hat.
- Wash bag.

## Outdoor wear

- Waterproof or warm coat (if travelling between September and May)
- Umbrella

## Electronics

- Bring electronic products at your own risk – some students do travel with kindles and smartphones
- Adaptors - Chinese electrical outlets are 220 volt and use the US standard plug shape. Please check your specific devices' voltages to be sure if they will work with 220 volts
- Phone chargers
- Camera (and spare memory cards)

## Travel

- Earplugs and an eye-mask
- A jumper (it gets cold on long-haul flights or in airports during stop over)

## Extras

Trip specific (itinerary-dependent) take out points as necessary

- A swimming costume (to wear in the mud baths)
- Some Hong Kong Dollars

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- Small gift for charity or orphanage visit (this may be organised by your school) Key rings, fridge magnets and postcards are all suitable gifts.
- Our guide will hand out our Learning Adventure T-shirt at the first two day as a gift. Occasionally the T-shirts will be a bit later than that. (take out if the trip needs to be white labeled)

**Please take notice that spray with iron container more than 120ml is not allowed to take on trains or subway.**

## Finally...

Make sure you leave room in your luggage – there are plenty of souvenirs you'll want to pick up.

## **BUDGETING: POCKET MONEY AND SPENDING YOUR MONEY IN CHINA**

*What currencies do we need, where can I get it and how much pocket money should I bring?*

The currency in China is Chinese Yuan (CNY) and you can change money at all post office branches but you need to order them online first or you can change money at the airport when you arrive. Moreover, on a Learning Adventure tour, all expenses will be covered during the trip, if you would like some spending money to pick up souvenirs we recommend between 30-80yuan per day (depending on your spending habits..!)

Here are some price guidelines to give you an idea of how much things cost:

- Can of coke: 3 RMB
- Postcard: 3-5 RMB
- Bottled of 500ml Water: 2RMB

## *How can I get money in China?*

You can withdraw money at most ATMs in China's main cities. We advise that you notify your bank that you will be travelling before you depart. In addition, don't forget that many banks and cards do charge a foreign transaction fee when withdrawing money while abroad. However, we recommend you to prepare in advance as it is not very convenient for any student to get separated from the group to take out money.

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## LANGUAGE BASICS: SURVIVAL CHINESE

While most Chinese people speak some English, practicing a few words in Chinese goes a long way.

- 你好! (Nǐ hǎo!) - Hello!
- 谢谢! (Xiè xie!) - Thank you!
- 对不起 (Dui bù qǐ) – Sorry
- 过一下 (Guò yí xià) - Excuse me (In the sense of asking to pass by somebody)
- 卫生间在哪里? (Wèi sheng jiān zài nǎ lǐ?) – Where is the toilet?
- 这个多少钱? (Zhè ge duō shǎo qián?) - How much is this?
- 太贵了! (Tài guì le!) - Too expensive!
- 便宜一点儿吧 (Piányí yī diǎn ba) - Can you make a little cheaper?
- 你叫什么名字? (nǐ jiào shén me míngzi?) - What is your name?
- 我叫[...], 你呢? (Wǒ jiào [...], nǐ ne?) - I am called [...], how about you?
- 再见! (Zài jiàn!) - Goodbye!

## HEALTH & VACCINATIONS:

On most of our trips we endeavor to enter no areas with tropical diseases; therefore other than standard travelling vaccinations, no vaccinations are required. As with all trips outside of Europe, we recommend all travellers to see a travel nurse with their itinerary prior to leaving for your trip. Please note, our lead guides will bring a first-aid kit with them every day, but if any of the passengers has any sickness, they should also bring their own medicine with them every day.

## SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUR TRIP AND CONTACTING HOME

In China, websites like Facebook, Twitter and Google/Gmail are blocked but it is possible to get round the 'Great Firewall of China' with a VPN (virtual proxy networks).

Parents and guardians can call the school or lead teacher in the case of an emergency and they will put them in touch with the team in China.

## Can I use my mobile in China?

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# The Learning Adventure

There is wifi available in nearly all hostels and hotels that you can connect to using a smart phone or tablet. Most students use messaging services such as Whatsapp to message home, when there is wifi. But sometimes people can't use Whatsapp without a VPN, so students and their parents can use skype or download a wechat (a popular chatting app in China) to keep in contact with each other.

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