



GUIDE FOR FOREIGN EXPERTS WORKING IN CHINA 外·国·专·家·在·华·工·作·手·册

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GUIDE FOR FOREIGN EXPERTS WORKING IN CHINA



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A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO CHINA

China is the abbreviation of the People's Republic of China. The "Five-Star Red Flag" is its national flag while the national emblem has Tian'anmen at its centre, illuminated by five stars and encircled by ears of grain and a cog wheel. Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China.

1. China's Position in the World

A. Geology and Climate

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Located at the east of the Asian continent on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean, China's altitude falls from west to east. It has a territory of 9.6 million square kilometres, comprising 6.5 per cent of the earth's landmass. In terms of territorial extent, it is the largest country in Asia and the third largest in the world. Of its territory, 33 per cent are mountains, 26 per cent are plateaus, 10 per cent are hills, 19 per cent are basins while plains make up only 12 per cent. Its land borders extend to about 200,000 kilometres and it shares frontiers with the following neighbours — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Russia, Mongolia, Kazakstan, Tajikistan, Kirghizstan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Burma, Laos and Viet Nam. Its

coastline is as long as 180,000 kilometres from the outlet of Yalu River in the north to the outlet of Beilun River in the south. The long coast is lashed by the salty waters of Bohai Sea, Yellow Sea, East China Sea and South China Sea. China's maritime neighbours are the Republic of Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia. China has as many as 5,000 islands with Taiwan the biggest followed by Hainan. Agreement has been reached with Great Britain that China will resume sovereignty over Hong Kong island (as well as Kowloon and the New Territories opposite Hong Kong) starting from July 1 1997.

The 6, 300-kilometre long Yangtze River is China's longest and the world's third longest water-course. The Yellow River, at over 5,464 kilometres in length is the country's second longest river. Other major rivers are the Heilongjiang River, Haihe River, Huaihe River, Qiantangjiang River and Zhujiang River. Lakes in China cover a total area of 80, 000 square kilometres. The major fresh-water lakes are Boyang Lake, Dongting Lake, Taihu Lake and Hongzehu Lake. Major salt-water lakes include Qinghai Lake, Namu Lake, Qilin Lake and Luobupo Lake.

The Himalayas are the biggest and highest mountain system in the world. Mount Qomolangma (Everest), rising between China and Nepal has an altitude of 8,848.13 metres and is known as "the Roof of the World." Other major mountain ranges in China include: Tianshan, Kunlunshan, Hengduanshan, Qilianshan, Yinshan, Qinling, Greater Xinganling, Changbai, Nanling and the mountains

in Taiwan. The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, Loess Plateau and Inner Mongolia Plateau are the four major plateaus in China. The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau with an altitude of over 4,000 metres is the highest plateau in the world. The Northeast Plain, North China Plain and the Yangtze River Plain are China's three major plains.

Covering a wide area, climates in China vary enormously, ranging from tropical, subtropical, warm-temperate, temperate to cool-temperate in character. The bulk of Chinese territory, however, lies within subtropical and temperate climatic zones and weather conditions therein are dominated by the East Asian monsoons. Temperature variation from north and south is considerable. The northern part of the northern Heilongjiang Province, for instance, has no summer while inhabitants in southern Hainan Island never experience winter conditions. It is generally windy between October and March, making it feel cold and dry. Between April and September, rainfall, high temperatures and winds dominate. Precipitation along the coast varies from an annual 1,500 millimetres in the wetter south and east to well under 500 millimetres in the drier north west.

B. Political Structure

The People's Republic of China is a socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants. The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China is the highest organ of state power. It exercises the legislative power of the state and elects the President and the Vice-President of the People's Republic of

China. It also decides on the choice of the Premier of the State Council upon nomination by the President of the People's Republic of China, and decides on the choices for the Vice Premiers, State Councillors, Ministers in charge of ministries or commissions and the Auditor-General and the Secretary General of the State Council. When the National People's Congress is not in session, its power is exercised by its Standing Committee. The State Council, that is the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, is the executive body of the highest organ of state powers and state administration. The Premier is the head of the State Council. Supreme People's Court is the highest judicial organ and the Supreme People's Procuratorate is the highest procuratorial organ. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a broadly representative organization of the united front under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, plays an important role in the political life of the state.

China pursues an independent foreign policy and advocates the Five Principles of mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity; mutual nonaggression; mutual non-interference in internal affairs; mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence. China seeks normal diplomatic relations with all countries and promotes economic, scientific and cultural exchanges with them. It opposes imperialism, hegemonism and colonialism. It is willing to work for the unity of all the peoples of the world and contribute to the world progressive cause. As a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations, China has established diplomatic relations with

most countries in the world and is playing an increasingly important role in world affairs.

C. Economic Construction

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the once poverty-stricken and backward country has been built step by step into a prosperous socialist country. Remarkable progress has been made in its economic construction, especially after the country adopted the reform and opening-up policies. In rural areas, the effective system which contracts collectively-owned farmland to each household has been continued and perfected. In urban areas, new reform measures have been taken to improve the State-owned enterprises' management and administration. While strengthening the publicly-owned economy, the development of selfemployed, private and foreign-funded sectors are encouraged. Macro economic adjustment and control have been improved; the role of the market mechanism has been strengthened; the markets for consuming goods and production materials have been enlarged while the markets of monetary, technology, labour, information and real estate have come into being. Transportation and energy industries, as well as domestic and foreign trade, have been greatly developed while impressive progress has been made in the development of science, education, culture, health care and sports. All these developments contribute to the raising of living standards in China. In the past few years, the country's industrial output value has been increasing at an average of 15 per cent, while agriculture is increasing at a speed of 4.9 per cent. With its gross national product increasing

at an average of 7.9 per cent, China has become one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

However, because of its huge population and weak economic foundation, China's gross national product is low when it is divided by the population. In many fields, for instance science and technology, China, a developing country, still lags behind developed countries. To build China into a socialist country with Chinese characteristics, the country is deepening its reforms by opening wider to the outside world. To solve problems such as shortages of funding, talent and backward technology, China has been encouraging foreign investment and inviting foreign experts to work in China.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

China has 23 provinces, five autonomous regions and three municipalities directly under the central government. Details of each are shown in the following table:

NAME	AREA (in sq. km)	POPULATION (in 10,000)	CAPITAL
Beijing	16806	1000	
Tianjin	11305	800	
Shanghai	6340	1200	
Hebei	187700	5700	Shijiazhuang
Shanxi	156300	2600	Taiyuan