



TradeMissions

Design Industry Capability Mission to China

Shanghai, Nanjing, Xi'an, Tianjin & Beijing



Briefing Kit

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Hotels

Shanghai

Hengshan Hotel
No. 534 Hengshan Road,
Shanghai 200030
P: 86 21 6437 7050

上海衡山宾馆
地址: 上海衡山路534号
电话: 64377050

Nanjing

Jinling Hotel
No.2 Hanzhong Road,
Nanjing 210005
P: 86 25 8471 1888

金陵饭店
地址: 南京市汉中路2号
电话: (025) 8471 1888

Xi'an

Howard Johnson Ginwa Plaza Hotel
No.18 West Section, Huancheng South Road,
Xi'an 710061
P: 86 29 8842 1111

金花豪生国际大酒店
地址: 西安市环城南路18号
电话: (029) 8842 1111

Tianjin

Sheraton Tianjin Hotel
Zi Jin Shan Road
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P: 86 22 2334 3388

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Location

Situated in eastern Asia on the western shore of the Pacific Ocean, China is the third largest country in the world and the biggest of all Asian countries. With an area of 9.6 million square kilometres, it is 1.25 times the size of Australia. China's continental coastline extends for about 18,000 kilometres, and its vast sea surface is studded with more than 5,000 islands, of which Taiwan and Hainan are the largest. It extends more than 5000 kilometres from east to west and more than 5,500 kilometres from north to south, its southern borders lying 4,500 kilometres northwest of Northern Australia.

China is divided into 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, 4 municipalities under the direct jurisdiction of the Central Government, and 2 special administrative regions. The 23 provinces are Hebei, Shanxi, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangxi, Fujian, Taiwan, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, and Hainan. The 5 autonomous regions are Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Guangxi, and Tibet. The four municipalities are Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Chongqing, whilst Hong Kong and Macao are the Special Administrative regions.

Shanghai, also known as "Hu", is a bustling metropolis located at the mouth of the Yangtze River. Connected with Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces in the west, the city is washed by the East China Sea on the east and Hangzhou Bay on the south. Shanghai covers an area of 6,341 square kilometres (about 2,448 square miles). It also assumes the central location along China's coastal line. Due to its advantageous geographic location, Shanghai has today become an excellent sea and river port, boasting easy access to a huge surrounding area.

Nanjing, known as Jinling in ancient times, is the capital of Jiangsu Province. It is located on the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, surrounded by mountains and rivers, with a humid climate. Nanjing served as the capital for ten dynasties. It covers an area of 2.5 thousand square miles and has 5.06 million residents.

Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province, is located in the heart of the Guanzhong Basin, with the Weihe River running along the northern border of the city. It is the largest metropolis in northwestern China. Known as Chang'an in ancient China, Xi'an is a world-renowned ancient capital.

Tianjin, one of the four municipalities directly under the Central Government in China, it is located in the northeast of the North China Plain and is the closest seaport to Beijing. The city is one of the biggest industrial and port cities in China and it is also known as "the diamond of the Bohai Gulf". It is where the Grand Canal of China connects with the Huang He and Chang Jiang rivers. Tianjin covers an area of 11,000 square kilometres (4,200 square miles).

As the capital of the People's Republic of China, Beijing is the nation's centre of government, economy, culture, and international activities, as well as serving as a transportation hub to the entire country. With a population of 11 million people, Beijing contains 18 districts and counties covering an area of 10,450 square miles.

Climate

Weather conditions and temperatures in China vary considerably which provide endless year-round variety for visitors, from ice festivals in the north to tropical beach resorts in the south. While China is a year-round destination, the months of May, September, and October are ideal months for travel anywhere in the country.

	Sep	Oct	Nov
Shanghai			
Max °C	28	23	17
Min °C	19	14	7
Rainfall mm	130	71	51
Beijing			
Max °C	26	20	9
Min °C	14	6	-2
Rainfall mm	58	16	11

Time Difference

Sydney, Melbourne	2	5	8	11	14	17	20	23
Shanghai, Nanjing, Beijing, China	12	3	6	9	12	15	18	21

Mobile Phones

Network accepted in China is GSM, check with your network provider for international roaming.

TIP: If Telstra is your network provider to retrieve voice messages send a blank text message to 101 and you will receive a call back within minutes with the message details.

Internet Service

Dialup access from your own computer

If you have your own computer you will find dialling the Internet from a phone line very easy. You do not require an ISP (internet service provider), as the government provides a global ISP in the phone system. You do not need to purchase an Internet access card, as it is the phone line that gets billed. Check with your hotel the associated costs/charges will be for dialling up the Internet.

Try one of these two dialup options:

Phone number: 16900

or

Phone number: 16300

Login: 169

Login: 163

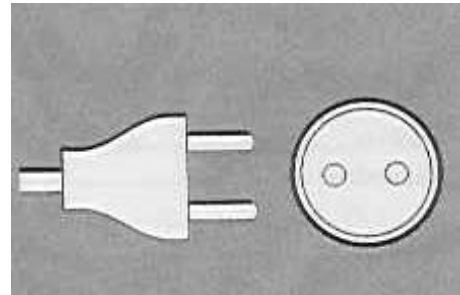
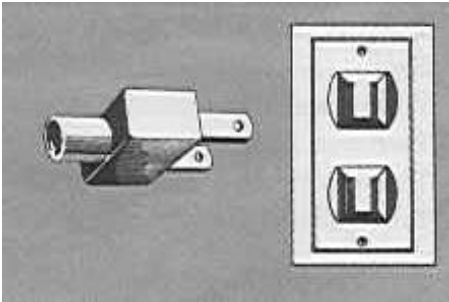
Password: 169

Password: 163

If you do not have your own laptop, most hotels have computers with Internet access or will point you to the closest location of an Internet cafe.

Electricity

In China, 220-volt, 50 cycles alternating current (AC) outlets are most common. Plugs come in a wide range with either two or three differently shaped prongs, so a travel conversion plug can be useful.



Trading Hours

- Government offices and larger businesses are open from 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday with an hour for lunch and Saturday from 9.00am to 1.00pm.
- Many Chinese shops and department stores keep extended hours, opening from 10.00am to 10.00pm daily.

Currency

China's official currency is the Renminbi (RMB), also known as "Yuan". The basic unit of RMB is the yuan (¥), also known as kuai. Yuan notes come in 1, 2, 5, 10, 50, and 100. Ten Jiao make up one Yuan.

Currency Exchange Rate

A dollar exchanges for about 6.29971 yuan. Exchange rates may change at any time according to the market conditions.

Currency

You can use cash (yuan and dollar), credit card and traveller's cheques in China. When you need to exchange your foreign currency visit a bank, exchange service centre, or an authorised exchange dealer.

Business hours:

Banks and Government offices are open from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm from Mondays to Fridays. Bank branches in large hotels are usually open on Saturday.

Traveller's Cheque

There are plenty of bureaux de changes around China at major hotels and shopping centres as well as at the airport. The Bank of China will exchange foreign currencies and traveller's cheques for Renminbi. Note that American Dollars are universally preferred to any other currency, and carrying some dollars in reserve is advisable.

Credit Card

Visa, Master Card, American Express, Diners Club credit cards are accepted at most hotels and state-run shops in the major cities. You should be prepared to pay in Yuan when shopping in smaller shops, restaurants, and in smaller hotels.

ATM

Networked ATMs allowing withdrawal from international bank accounts are not common. Presently, Automatic Teller Machines that work with foreign currency can only be found in the major commercial centres of Hong Kong, Beijing, and Shanghai. Do not rely on them as a source of cash. You should check with your bank at home as to what the availability and cost of using ATMs in China is.

Transportation around China

Taxi

With large numbers of taxis running around, it is very convenient to take taxis in all large Chinese cities. It is not very expensive to hire a taxi in China. There are taxi companies in most of the urban areas in Chinese cities. Taxis are available at any time around big hotels, guesthouses, railway stations, airports, major communications trunk lines and busy commercial areas. In most cities, the taxi tends to be a small local-made car painted in either red or yellow. In large cities, there are luxurious sedans at a higher rate.

Taxi fares vary from city to city but they are always clearly marked on the taxi window. Taxi services are normally chargeable according to the mileage completed and the time used. When a passenger embarks on a taxi, the taximeter will begin to indicate a basic rate chargeable. After running four to six kilometres, the fare payable will increase progressively in line with the mileage completed, with the fare chargeable for each kilometre varying according to the size and grade of the vehicle. When the taxi runs at a speed slower than a certain standard, an extra charge will be added to the basic rate chargeable on a minute-counting basis.

When taking a taxi, the passenger should first of all ask the driver to switch on the taximeter. Most taxi drivers do not understand much English, although those in tourist cities are encouraged to learn and speak some simple English. Non-Chinese speaking visitors are advised to have their destinations written down in Chinese and show the address to the cab driver. When arriving at the place of destination, the passenger should ask the driver to write a receipt to prevent possible unfair charge.

Buses

Buses are still major public transportation means in all large cities of China. There are normally dozens of routes of buses in large cities. Given the large numbers of passengers, crowded roads and complicated routes, this is not a recommended form of transport.

There is normally an interval of 5 to 10 minutes between buses. During the rush hour, the interval is shortened to two or three minutes. Passengers shall buy tickets from bus conductors. The prices of bus tickets vary in accordance with different numbers of stops.

Subway

The four largest Chinese cities - Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Guangzhou all have well-equipped subway systems, with all the stations, ticket-booking offices and transit points clearly marked with their names both in Chinese and English. In every subway train, travel information is read alternately in Chinese and English.

The subway transportation operates 18 hours per day, normally between 5.10 and 23.30 local time, with an interval of four to six minutes between every two trains. The hours between 6.30 and 8.30 and between 17.00 and 19.00 are the morning and evening rush hours respectively.

Useful Phrases

English	Mandarin	Pronounced as..
Hello	<i>Ni hao</i>	Nee how
Good morning	<i>Zao shang hao</i>	Dsow shang how
Good afternoon	<i>Xia wu hao</i>	Sheea wu how
Good evening	<i>Wan shang hao</i>	Wan shang how
Goodbye	<i>Zai jian</i>	Zai jee en
My name is...	<i>Wo jiao</i>	Waw jeow
One, two, three, four	<i>Yi, er, san, si</i>	Yee, ur, san, see
Thank you	<i>Xie xie ni</i>	Shay shay nee
Please	<i>Qing</i>	Ching
Excuse me	<i>Dui bu qi</i>	Doo ay boo chee
How much?	<i>Duo shao...?</i>	Dwo show
Where is...?	<i>Zai na li...?</i>	Zai na lee
Ticket	<i>Che piao</i>	Ch peeow
Bill	<i>Zhang dan</i>	Jang dan
I would like...	<i>Wo xiang yao</i>	Wo shiang yow
Is this bus for...?	<i>Zhe che qu... ma?</i>	Je ch chu... ma
Where are the toilets?	<i>Xi shou jian zai na?</i>	She show jee en dsai na
Yes	<i>Shi</i>	Shr
No	<i>Bu shi</i>	Boo shr

Business Etiquette

Making Appointments

- Being late for an appointment is considered a serious insult in Chinese business culture. If you are going to be late inform your Chinese business partner about it. Allowing them to make adjustments or re-arrangements.
- When scheduling your appointments, take note of holidays such as Chinese New Year, May Day or the National Day, many businesses will be closed during this period. The date of these occasions varies from year to year due to an official advisory to allow for the long holidays.

Conversation

- Before your visit, it is a good idea to prepare yourself by studying aspects of Chinese language, culture, history, and geography. Your hosts will appreciate your initiative. If you speak Chinese, they will really appreciate your efforts and take your initiative of doing business in China more seriously than if you do not speak any Mandarin. Moreover, your ability of being able to understand the Chinese language will help you to establish a better "Guanxi" among your Chinese associates.
- Negative replies are considered impolite. Instead of saying "no", answer "maybe", "I will think about it", or "We will see" and get into specifics later. You will find that the Chinese will do the same. When your Chinese counterpart smilingly and politely or even enthusiastically replies with, "no big problem" or "the problem is not serious", they usually mean, "there are still problems". You should inquire more about the potential problems that still exist.
- You may be asked intrusive questions concerning your age, income, and marital status. If you don't want to reveal this information, remain polite and give an unspecific answer. However, revealing your age and marital status (not income, though) could benefit you in doing business in China. But don't express irritation with the questioner, since 'losing face' has such negative implications in this culture.
- "Small talk" is considered especially important at the beginning of a meeting. Welcome topics of conversation include: Chinese scenery & landmarks; weather, climate, and geography of China; your travels in other countries; your positive experiences travelling in China and the recent economic developments in China; and Chinese art.
- First Name or Title? Use official titles whenever possible such as "General", "Committee Member", or "Bureau Chief". It is customary to address the deputies by skipping the word deputy. For example you would use "Chief" for Deputy Chief, "Chairman" for Vice Chairman, "General Manager" for Assistant General Manager. If a person does not have a professional title, use "Mr.", "Madam", "Miss", together with their last name.

Guanxi

"Guanxi" stands for any type of relationship. In the Chinese business world, however, it is also understood as the network of relationships among various parties that cooperate together and support one another.

The Chinese businessmen mentality is very much one of "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." In essence, this boils down to exchanging favours, which are expected to be done regularly and voluntarily.

The right "Guanxi" in China will make all the difference in ensuring success. ...

The Chinese and Western cultures conduct business differently, even if, on the surface, transactions seem to be the same. The Chinese prefer to work with people they know and trust, so are less inclined to simply close a deal. With a strong relationship, however, you can be trusted and even favoured. This relationship extends between companies and also between individuals at a personal level on an ongoing basis.

Business Cards

The Chinese are very keen about exchanging business cards, so be sure to bring a plentiful supply. It is helpful if one side of the business card is in English and the other side is printed in Chinese. Include your professional title on your business card, especially if you have the seniority to make decisions.

In Chinese business culture, the main point of exchanging business cards is to determine who will be the key decision-makers on your side.

Present your card with two hands, and ensure that the Chinese side is facing the recipient.

When receiving a business card, make a show of examining it carefully for a few moments; then, carefully place it into your card case or on the table, if you are seated at one. Not reading a business card that has been presented to you, then placing it directly into your back pocket, will be a breach of protocol.

Deal-Making

It will be of benefit to you to bring your own interpreter if possible to help you understand the subtleties of all that is being said during the meeting.

You should speak in short, simple, sentences free of jargon and slang. Take frequent pauses between sentences so that people will be able to understand everything you have said.

You may be required to make presentations to different levels of the organisation.

Prior to arrival you should make sure that you have sufficient copies of your proposal ready for distribution.

“Saving face” is an important concept to understand. In Chinese business culture, a person's reputation and social standing rests on this concept. Causing embarrassment or loss of composure, even unintentionally, can be disastrous for business negotiations.

In accordance with Chinese business protocol, people are expected to enter the meeting room in hierarchical order. For example, the Chinese will assume that the first foreigner to enter the room is head of the delegation. Since there is such a strong emphasis on hierarchy in Chinese business culture, ensure that you bring a senior member of your organisation to lead the negotiations on your behalf. The Chinese will do the same. Only the senior members of your group are expected to lead the discussion. The Chinese may consider interruptions of any kind from subordinates outrageous.

The Chinese will not directly say “no” to you. Instead, ambivalent answers such as “perhaps”, “I'm not sure”, “I'll think about it”, or “We'll see” usually mean “no.”

The Chinese tend to extend negotiations well beyond the official deadline to gain advantage. On the final day of your visit, they even may try to renegotiate everything. You may have to make several trips to China to achieve your objectives.

Chinese businesspeople prefer to establish a strong relationship before closing a deal. Be patient, show little emotion, and calmly accept that delays will occur. Moreover, do not mention deadlines. Even after the contract is signed, the Chinese will often continue to press for a better deal.

Gift-Giving

Giving a gift to the entire company, rather than an individual, can be acceptable in Chinese business culture as long as you adhere to the following rules: all business negotiations should be concluded before gifts are exchanged; specify that the gift is from the company you represent; present the gift to the leader of the Chinese negotiating team; do not get anything that is obviously expensive, so that the company will not feel obliged to reciprocate; make sure that the gifts given to people of the same level of importance are equitable or of similar grade. Somehow, they may find out later, and the difference may lead to strains in your relationship.

Gifts are not a pre-requisite unless proceedings are pre-arranged with formality (by Chinese standards, not yours). However, if you feel that a gift is appropriate, small items with a particular Australian theme are generally most appropriate.

Ai Group has found that the following gifts are of good quality; they are reasonably priced and are well received in Asia. You can purchase them from Potoroo, Shop V10, Southgate Landing, South Bank. For more information contact Jean on 03 9690 9859.

Pewter Kangaroo Chop Stick Rest	\$10.50	Red Gum Chop Sticks	\$9.50
Red Gum Business Card Holder	\$29.50	Small Red Gum Desk Box	\$29.50
Letter Knife with Red Gum Handle	\$19.50	Pewter Letter Knife Kangaroo/Platypus motif	\$29.95
Pewter Bottle Stopper with Aus Animal motif	\$27.50	Pewter Coaster with Aus Animal motif	\$15.95
Pewter Business Card/Letter Holder	\$25.00	Shot Glass with Pewter Aus Animal motif	\$22.50
Pewter Spoons Aus Animal motif	\$22.50	Miniature Pewter Figurines Aus Animal motif	\$10.50

The following are a few 'no, no' objects that we recommend you take note of when choosing gifts: **Scissors & Knives or other sharp objects** - they connote a severing of ties. **Clock** - in Chinese, "Giving a Clock" sounds like "Attending a Funeral". **Plum Blossoms** - the Chinese word for plum 'Mei' also sounds like the word for 'Bad Luck'.

Acceptable colours for gift-wrapping are red, pink, gold and silver. Wrapping in yellow paper with black writing is a gift given only to the dead. Avoid gifts or wrapping paper in white, black or blue. Since colours have so many different meanings in the Chinese culture, your safest option is to entrust the task of gift-wrapping to a store or hotel that offers this service.

If you have some spare time you may want to visit some of the following places.

Shanghai Tourist Sites

Urban Planning Exhibition Hall

This museum has five floors that detail the ambitious plans of Shanghai's urban planners. Visitors are provided with a glimpse of how Shanghai will look like in a couple of decades. The centrepiece on the third floor is a huge model of the city as it is now. Check out the map on the first half floor, where the districts scheduled to be cleared for new constructions and green areas are marked. In the basement, old Shanghai is rebuilt with house entrances; cobble stone ways and operating shops and teahouses. Trading hours are 9.00am to 4.00pm daily.

Walk the Bund

One of Shanghai's most historical streets, the Bund (or Zhongshan Lu) stretches along the west bank of the Huangpu River. First built by the British after the 19th century Opium Wars on a muddy embankment, the Bund gradually gained status as the "foreign street" of Shanghai where companies and consulates from all over the world set up shop, giving it a cosmopolitan atmosphere as well as a large cash injection. Many of the Art Deco colonial buildings from the 1930s remain. One of the most architecturally impressive edifices here is the former Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank at number 14, now the Shanghai Pudong Development Bank. The most amazing views of the skyscrapers of the modern Pudong district can be seen across the river, especially at night. For maximum enjoyment, take a ferry (10 minutes; CNY0.50; nearest metro Lujiazui) from Pudong to the south end of the Bund, taking in the view first and then visiting some of the old buildings.

Nanjing Lu

Popular with Chinese tourists and extremely crowded at the weekends, the pedestrian's stretch of Nanjing Lu from Henan Zhong Lu to People's Square is one of the main shopping streets of Shanghai and a good place to come if you want to see modern Shanghai in action. This Mecca to consumerism is home to some of the oldest department stores of the city as well as plenty of sparkling new, trendy shops and fast food restaurants selling anything from burgers to chop suey.

Nanjing Tourist Sites

Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge

Designed by China and constructed with homemade materials, this bridge, opened to traffic in October 1968, is a double-decker with a four-lane, 4,589-meter-long highway and 6,772-meter-long double railroad tracks.

Zhonghua Gate

Known as Jubao (Treasure Accumulation) Gate in the Ming Dynasty, it has three barbicans and four gates. The castle, the largest in China, is 128 meters from north to south and 118 meters from east to west and is capable of stationing 3,000 soldiers.

Qinhuai River

The Qinhuai River flows for 5km through the southern part of Nanjing. From the 14th to the early 20th century, shops, restaurants and brothels flourished along its banks. The beautiful lantern boats that glided on the Qinhuai River were next to none in colour and artistry. Recent renovations have restored the Qinhuai River and its famous sites to their former beauty.

Xi'an Tourist Sites

Terracotta Warriors Museum

The Terracotta Warriors and Horses in Xi'an are known as "the Eighth Wonder of the World" and listed in the World Cultural Heritage List. In March 1974, peasants in Xiyang Village came across a piece of an earthen figure when digging a well, leading to the discovery of Pit No.1 in the present Terracotta Warriors Museum. In the summer of 1976, pits No.2 and 3 were located. Over 7,000 individual pottery soldiers, horses, chariots and weapons have been identified in the three pits. The warriors and horses were sculptured to protect the tomb of Qin Shihuang (the First Emperor). By 221 B.C., he defeated six countries in less than ten years, concluding the chaos of more than 500 years known as the Warring States Period. By this time, China's first-ever centralised feudal power was founded and laid a solid basis for the rapid development of economy, politics, ideology and culture. Qin Shihuang founded its capital in Xi'an, and created one of the greatest ancient cities the world has ever known.

City Wall

The City Wall of Xian is just at the centre of Xi'an municipality. The perimeter of the city wall is 11.9 kilometres, with four gates constructed in the four directions of east, south, west and north. The construction system of the city gates is in a four-rampart and 12-gate style. The Northern City Gate is called Anyuan Gate, the Southern City Gate is called Yong'an Gate, the West City Gate is called Anding Gate, and the East City Gate is called Changle Gate. It was rebuilt and extended on the base of the original Tang Dynasty Palace Wall from the seventh year to the eleventh year of Hongwu in Ming Dynasty (from 1374 to 1378 AD). It has a history of up to 600 years and is also the largest, solid and complete city wall that has survived throughout the long history of China.

The Bell Tower

Situated in Xi'an city, capital of Shaanxi Province. In the beginning it was constructed in the 17th year of Emperor Hong Wu reign of the Ming Dynasty (1384) at now Guangji street cross and in the 10th year of Wanli removed to the present site. The construction of the three storeyed Bell Tower has multi-eaves, sunken cornices and pinnacles with turning corners. The building basement area is 1377.4 square meters with four gateways connecting four streets. Each of the four sides of the building pedestal is 35.5 m broad and 8.6 m high. The height of the building is 27.4 m while it is 36 m high from ground to top. The architecture is grand and the art is superb. Ascending the tower to look around, one can get the bird's-eye view of the whole panorama of the ancient Xian city.

Tianjin Tourist Sites

Tianjin has few actual sights, and it's the city's streetscapes, an collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century foreign architecture, mostly European, put together with the concrete and glass monoliths of wealthy contemporary China, which are its most interesting attraction. The old city was strictly demarcated into national zones, and each section of the city centre has retained a hint of its old flavour.

Ancient Culture Street

Ancient Culture Street runs off the southern side of Beima Lu, its entrance marked by a colourful arch. It used to be one of earliest water transport docklands in Tianjin where is one of the busiest

cities of commerce and trade in history. Halfway down the street is the entrance to the heavily restored Sea Goddess Temple open daily from 8.00am to 4.30pm. The temple was built in 1326 and is the oldest building in Tianjin.

Great Wall at Huangyaguan Pass

Spectacular, staggering, stupendous and astounding are just a few adjectives that describe this Great Wall. Construction under first began in 556 during the Ming dynasty. This section stretches for 25 miles and features parapets, watchtowers and fire-pits. Though it lays 105 miles north of Tianjin it grades as one of the city's biggest attractions, and better yet crowds are much smaller than those that swarm the Great Wall areas near Beijing.

Mount Pan (Panshan)

These magical mountains tower 93 miles north of Tianjin and are rated as one of the world's greatest sites. Five main mountains are the dominant feature, highlighted by Moon Hanging Peak, a sheer wall of vertigo-inducing rock. Thick pine forests, echoing ravines, tumbling waterfalls and 72 ancient temples and pagodas provide the ultimate backdrop.

Beijing Tourist Sites

Tian'anmen Square

Tian'anmen Square is one of the largest city squares in the world. It is situated in the heart of Beijing. The square was built in 1417 and was the entrance gate to the Forbidden City. Now the square stretches 880 meters from north to south and 500 meters from east to west. The total area is 440,000 square meters. That's about the size of 60 soccer fields, spacious enough to accommodate half a million people.

Temple of Heaven

The unique architectural features of the Temple of Heaven delight numerologists, necromancers and the superstitious - not to mention acoustic engineers and carpenters. Shape, colour and sound take on symbolic significance there. The temples, seen from an aerial perspective, are round, and the bases are square, derived from the ancient Chinese belief that heaven is round and the earth is square. Thus the north end of the park is semicircular and the south end is square.

Forbidden City

The Forbidden City is located at the centre of Beijing. First built in 1406 and completed in 1420, the city served as the royal palace during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. During that time, 24 emperors lived there. Apart from the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Complete Harmony, the Hall of Preserving Harmony, and the East and West Inner Palaces, tourists can also visit the Exhibition Hall of Historical Relics, the Hall of Treasure, the Hall of Paintings, the Hall of Arts and Crafts, the Hall of Ceramics, the Hall of Bronze Ware and the Hall of Clocks.

Banquets & Entertaining in China

Entertaining guests at a Chinese banquet is an important way of establishing guanxi. An evening banquet is the most popular occasion for business entertaining. Generally, these events start between 5.30pm – 6.00pm and last for two hours. If you are the guest, you should arrive on time.

- Banquets are hosted with varying degrees of extravagance, usually in a restaurant. For more formal banquets, invitations will be sent and place cards will be at the table.
- Wait to be seated, as there is a seating etiquette based on hierarchy in Chinese business culture.
- Generally, the seat in the middle of the table, facing the door, is reserved for the host. The most senior guest of honour sits directly to the left. Everyone else is seated in descending order of status. The most senior member sits in the centre seat. Follow this seating pattern if you are hosting a banquet or a meal in your residence, whether for business or purely social reasons.
- The host is the first person at the table allowed to begin eating by suggesting the first drink. Then, the rest of the company can proceed with the meal. If you are the host, take the first piece of the most valued food and put it on your guest of honour's plate after leading the first drink. This will signify the beginning of the eating and is considered a friendly gesture.
- There are no firm rules regarding dinner conversation. Depending on the closeness of the relationship, business may or may not be discussed. Follow the host's lead.
- It is not uncommon for a host to order enough food for ten people at a table of five. He or she loses face if there are not plenty of leftovers at the end of a meal. Rice, considered by many Chinese to be filler, is generally not served until the end of a meal. So, if you want to eat rice with your meal be sure to ask the waitress [or 'shou jie'] to serve it early, particularly if the food is spicy.
- During a meal, as many as 20-30 courses can be served, so try not to eat too much at once. The best policy is to lightly sample each dish.
- Leaving a 'clean plate' is perceived to mean that you were not given enough food and can be perceived as an insult. On the other hand, leaving a food offering untouched will also give offence, even if you find a dish unappealing, try a small portion for the sake of politeness.
- One important part of Chinese business entertaining is a tea drinking ritual known as 'yum cha.' It is used to establish rapport before a meeting or during meals. If you do not want a 'refill' of tea, leave some in your cup.
- Drinking is an important part of Chinese entertaining. The drinking officially begins after the host offers a short toast to the group.
- It is always a good idea for the guest to return the toast either right away or after a few courses have been served.

- Safe topics for toasts are friendship, pledges for cooperation, the desire to reciprocate the hospitality, and mutual benefit.
- The Chinese understand if you are unable to drink alcohol. Stating medical reasons is always a good way to get out of drinking alcohol.
- The most common expression for toasting is Gan bei, meaning "dry cup", or bottoms up.
- The Chinese are not as understanding of tipsy guests as are the Japanese or Koreans. If you feel you have had enough, smile and politely indicate this to your host.
- Do not pour your own drink. It shows a lack of protocol.
- If you are served food that does not require utensils, you may be given a bowl of tea for the purpose of dipping and cleaning your fingers.
- It's perfectly acceptable to reach in front of others for dishes and other items.
- Seeds and bones are placed on the table or in an especially reserved dish, never place these objects in your bowl.
- It will be appreciated if you use chopsticks. When you are finished eating, place your chopsticks on the table or a chopstick rest.
- Placing your chopsticks parallel on top of your bowl is believed to bring bad luck.
- Sticking your chopsticks straight up in your rice bowl is considered rude because in this position, they resemble the joss sticks that are used in Chinese religious rituals.
- Do not put the end of the chopstick in your mouth.
- Try not to drop your chopsticks, as this is considered a sign of bad luck.
- Do not underestimate the importance of participating in dining and after-dinner entertainment. It is an excellent way to build guanxi.

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