



TRIP TO CHINA

Elephant Trunk Hill, Guilin City, Guangxi
(By Brittany. C)

**Celebrate Asian Culture
with GPT**



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CHINA TRAVEL TIPS

(By Brittany. C)

I have traveled to China since 2017 and had lived and worked there for 2 years from 2019-2021. I returned to China for holiday on April 2024 and boy, have many things changed. If you're not aware of what's going on, China is currently heading towards what may be economic stagnation. The Chinese government is taking extensive measures to stimulate foreign direct investment and drive inbound tourism. In other words, it's getting easier to travel, live, and work in China.

Let's get started with what you need to know!

PAYMENT METHODS

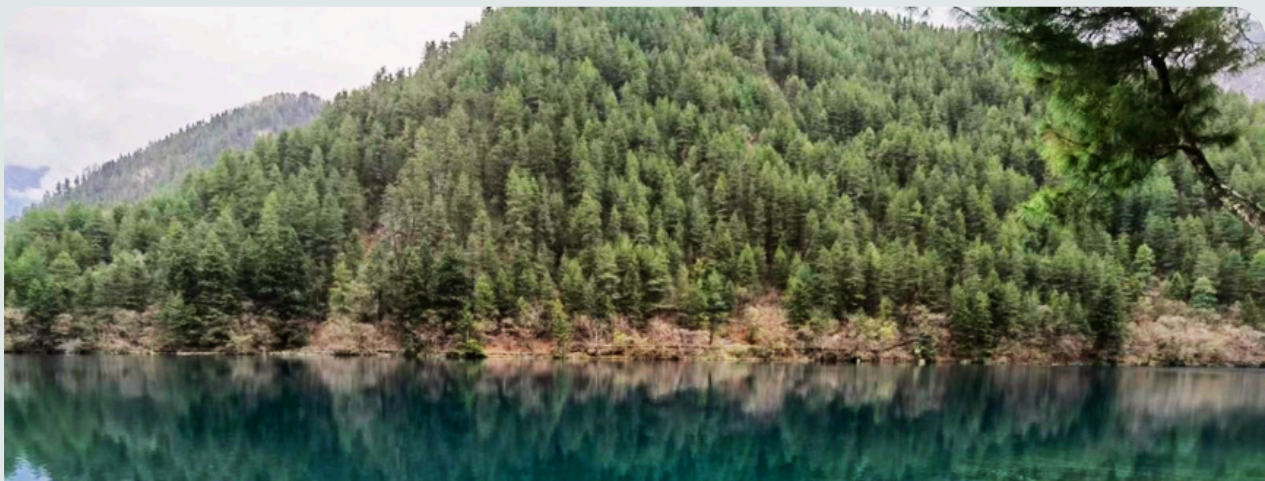
Digital pay and mobile wallets are king in China! Although Chinese merchants are required to accept cash by law, many have little to no cash on hand. That can be frustrating.

International Credit Cards: Major cities like Shanghai and Beijing accept credit cards such as Visa, Mastercard, and UnionPay.

WeChat: The best way however is to be like a Chinese native. Before you enter China, download the app WeChat. However to activate the payment function in WeChat, you might have to ask someone who has WeChat to help you get verified, just for fraud prevention, youth safety and well-being, etc.

Alipay: In combination with WeChat Wallet, you may want to get Alipay. You can get verified via your phone number. In the app are mini apps. Search for "TourCard" and follow the instructions. Please note that you can only top up to 10,000RMB per 3 months which is enough for travel expenses. You can link this Bank of Shanghai debit card that you get to your WeChat or AliPay.

Digital Yuan (e-CNY): This is a digital currency issued by the central bank back in 2019 but I am unfamiliar with this. Most places I have traveled to, even far-flung towns, accept the digital yuan.



Jiuzhai Valley National Park, Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan
(By Brittany. C)

SIM CARD

This is easy. Just go to the service desk at the airport and tell them that you want to purchase a sim card. Or you can get an e-sim via various of e-sim websites. Remembre to purchase it before you travel!

GETTING AROUND

Map: Download an app called Amap 高德地图. It's much more accurate than Baidu's map and directly connects to China's BeiDou navigation satellite system.

Taxis: I don't want to smear China, but sometimes taxi drivers can be sly and take a longer route. So how do you solve this? Set your destination on Amap and tell the taxi driver to follow the route.



Leshan Buddha, Leshan City, Sichuan
(By Brittany. C)



Jinding Peak of Mount Emei, Emei City, Sichuan
(By Brittany. C)

Didi: There are many other ride-hailing apps, but I use Didi because it's easy. You don't have to download an extra app. Just go to WeChat, tap "Services" and look for "Ride Hailing". Voila, that's the Didi mini app. Enter your destination address, make sure that the pin is set to where you want to be picked up, and wait for your ride. ***Do not pay the driver in cash or via any other way than Didi. If the driver refuses to send you the bill through Didi, tell the driver to first pay through Didi and that Didi will reimburse. Simply just walk away, otherwise you will have paid the driver but not Didi. Then file a report. Didi is very strict with its drivers and there are severe penalties for violations.***

Subways: They are amazing but can be very crowded. Every city is different. Some allow you to purchase a 1-way token, so make sure that you hold onto your token for getting on and off the subway. Beijing uses the iPass — 一卡通 which requires you to top up. Find the service desk, pay for the card, top up, and go.

Trains Not the Subway: Just directly go to the train station to book your train (don't forget your passport!) or do it via Trip.com in advance. There's also a mini app inside WeChat Services called "Rail & Flights".

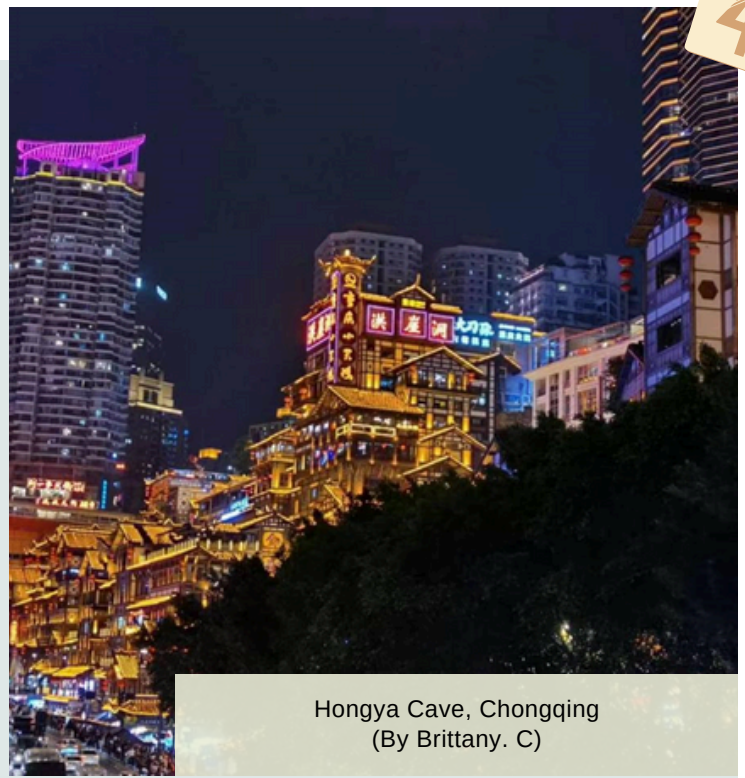
Long Distance Buses: Not all cities and towns have trains. I never book my buses in advance because buses operate frequently. However, it's best to note when services will stop running. Otherwise, you may have to sleep in the bus station for a night!

Airplanes: Flying is not as convenient as it is in the United States. Flights are commonly delayed in China due to lots of restricted airspace and bad weather.

Shared Bikes: These are commonly found throughout large cities. Just scan the QR code with WeChat to unlock it. Avoid going against the traffic!

MAFENGWO & LITTLE REDBOOK

These two social media apps are amazing! Mafengwo 马蜂窝 and Little Redbook 小红书 have lots of travel guides and tips. Without them, I would've been lost in Guilin City, Guangxi! I don't normally seek out private tours or tour groups because I'm pretty savvy around in China.

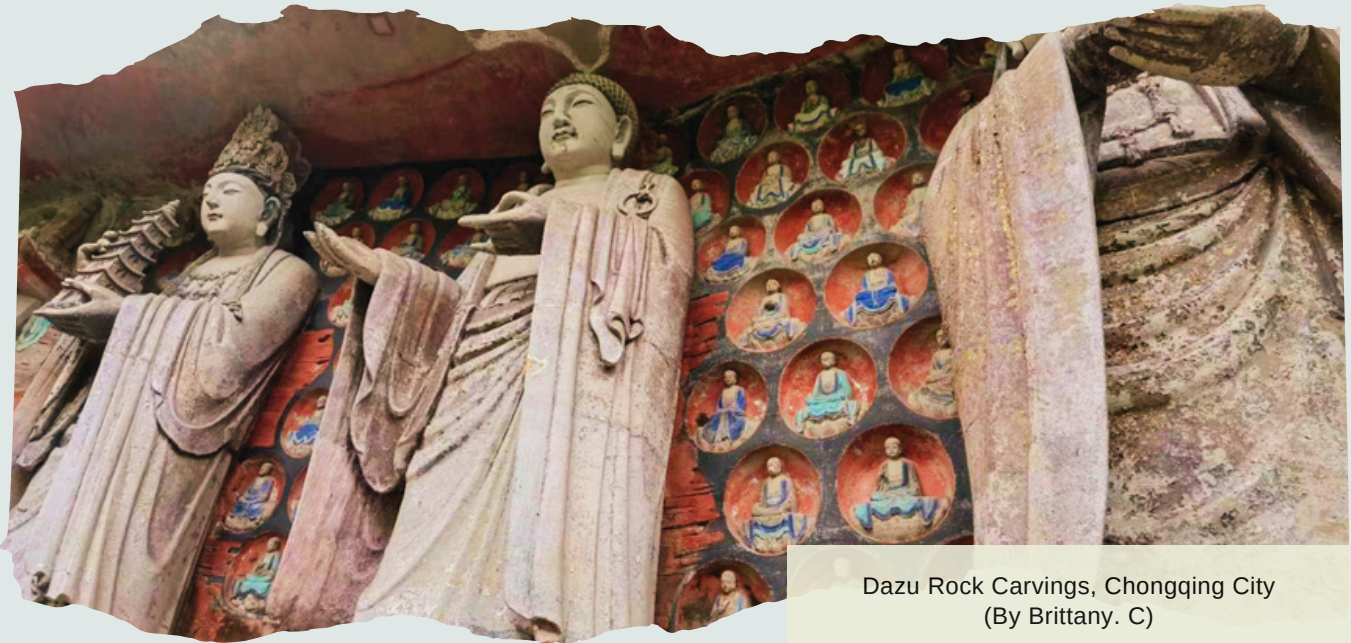


Hongya Cave, Chongqing
(By Brittany. C)

HOTELS

Not all hotels accept foreigners! It's best to book via Trip.com rather than randomly walk into a hotel and ask for rooms. This is because hotels are required to register foreigners and send the whereabouts information to the local police station. The Chinese government has stated foreigners no longer have to report their location, but some hotels do this to be on the safe side I suppose. *If you wish to travel to Tibet, you must register with a tour group, get a permit to enter Tibet, and stay in a designated hotel. Foreigners cannot wander on their own.* Another fun fact is that most hotels no longer require guests to pay a security deposit upfront and then have guests wait for the rooms to be checked when checking out. Yay!

If you are not staying in a hotel but at a relative's or friend's, just for safe measure, you may want to register yourself at a local police station.



Dazu Rock Carvings, Chongqing City
(By Brittany. C)

BOOK TICKETS IN ADVANCE

It's best to have a local Chinese friend book tickets for you. Some scenic spots require you to book a day in advance. For me personally, I just go to WeChat Search, search for the official WeChat account such as 三星堆博物馆 (Sanxingdui Museum) and book tickets there. It can be a hassle to enter passport information each time though. For very touristy places like the Palace Museum, it can be quite difficult to book tickets. I recommend going there very early and line up for your ticket purchase. Make sure you check the operation date and time. Yes, most museums close on Mondays. Plan ahead.

SUN PROTECTION

Goodness, I cannot stress this enough. Urban heat in China is real. Please protect yourself from head to toe. It will feel strange at first, but you will not regret carrying a sun parasol. Dress up however you feel is best, even if you look like a ninja.

TOILETS

Oh the horror! No, I'm not talking about the Asian squat. This is a more pressing issue. The sewage system in China is terribly engineered. Please dispose as little toilet paper into the toilet and flush frequently, especially when you have a bowel movement. Things will get stuck!!! Public toilets rarely carry toilet papers so make sure that you bring your own.

VPN

If you need to use VPN, download it before you enter China! I have used ExpressVPN for many years and it had worked before. This time though in 2024, it failed me. I guess that is because ExpressVPN is too well-known and it has been extra cracked down on. I recommend using a less popular service. Sometimes, you can still receive a batch of Google emails but they come delayed. It's strange but it's a nice loophole for foreigners.

FOOD DELIVERY PARADISE

You will fall in love with China's food delivery apps! There are 2 commonly used apps: Dianping 点评 and ele.me 饿了么. I use both, but mainly Dianping. Just enter your address, order whatever you want, and within an hour, your food is delivered! In fact, they don't just deliver food but also groceries and medicine, or hiring someone to help you run errands but I have not explored them.

MASKS AND POLLUTION

No, you don't need to mask up in post-COVID China. But the pollution is still a common occurrence in China, mainly in the north, but it has gotten better over the years.

PASSPORT, EMBASSY, AND CONSULATES

You should always carry your passport with you wherever you go. For instance, if you are going to Tiananmen Square, the police will check your passport. If you don't have the physical copy on hand, you can show them a screenshot of it on your phone and they will most likely let you pass.

This is for Americans only. The U.S. embassy is located in Beijing. There are 5 other consulates: Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Shenyang and Wuhan.



Huanglong National Park, Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan
(By Brittany. C)

Asian Heritage Month is an enriching celebration that honors the vast cultural, historical, and societal contributions of Asian communities. AI programs like ChatGPT make it ridiculously easy to explore those contributions - just start by asking questions!



Celebrating Asian Heritage Month with ChatGPT

(By Bonnie.C)

Ideas for using ChatGPT to Explore Asian Culture:

- **Culinary Journey:** Discover traditional recipes from various Asian cultures through ChatGPT. It can help you explore the ingredients and methods behind dishes like Korean Bibimbap or Thai Massaman curry.

Example: "If I have pork, lemongrass, and coconut milk, could you give me an Asian dish that is kid-friendly using these ingredients?"

ChatGPT: "A recommendation for a kid-friendly Asian dish using pork, lemongrass, and coconut milk is Thai Pork Meatballs in Coconut Sauce. This dish combines the flavors of Southeast Asia in a way that's appealing to both kids and adults. "

- **Literature and Films:** Gather recommendations for books and films by Asian creators for a book club or movie night.

Example: "I need some movie recommendations for an adult movie night. The movies should be directed by Asian creators and centered around Asian culture. I prefer films released between 2019 and 2021 with a score of at least 7.0 on IMDb."

ChatGPT: "Here are some highly-rated movies directed by Asian creators that focus on Asian cultures, released between 2019 and 2021, and have achieved a score of at least 8.0 on IMDb:

- "Drive My Car" (2021) - Directed by Ryusuke Hamaguchi
- "Minari" (2020)- Directed by Lee Isaac Chung
- "The Farewell" (2019)- Directed by Lulu Wang
- "Parasite" (2019) - Directed by Bong Joon-ho
- "A Sun" (2019) - Directed by Chung Mong-hong





- **Cultural Events:** While ChatGPT doesn't provide real-time updates, it can suggest typical cultural activities that occur during this month, helping you find or organize local or virtual events.

Example: "I'm interested in improving my mindfulness and well-being. Please provide information on webinars and community groups that focus on mindfulness practices and well-being philosophies rooted in Asian cultures and guided by Asians."

ChatGPT: "If you're looking to engage in mindfulness and well-being practices rooted in Asian cultures and guided by Asians, there are several webinars and community groups you might find beneficial:

- a. National Museum of Asian Art's Free Meditation Sessions
- b. Asian Culture & Media Alliance's Webinar Series
- c. Mindfulness & Compassion Webinar Series by Lisa Baylis



- **Historical Insights:** Use ChatGPT to learn about key events and figures in Asian American history. For instance, inquire about the impact of the Immigration Act of 1965 or get to know Asian American pioneers.

Example: "I'm a teacher - Help me explain Immigration Act of 1965 in a way that my 2nd grade class will understand."

ChatGPT: "Imagine your school is like a big house where only certain people can come to play based on very specific rules, like only kids who like certain games or who come from certain neighborhoods. A long time ago, the United States had similar rules about who could come to live in the country. They only let in certain people from certain places."



In 1965, there was a big change with a new rule called the Immigration Act of 1965. This rule made it fairer so more people from different places around the world could come and live in America. It was like saying, "Everyone is welcome to come and play, no matter what games you like or where you're from." This helped many different kinds of people come to America and make it even more diverse, like having a big, fun playdate with friends from all over the world!"

As you can see the possibilities of using AI for exploring Asian culture are incredible and nearly limitless - let us know what you find!

Celebrating Culture Night at Glenwood Elementary

(By Iris. Y)

What comes to mind when you think of the South? Before relocating to North Carolina in 2012, my understanding was limited, primarily associating it with the Civil Rights Movement and racial tensions. Soon after arriving in Chapel Hill, a UNC faculty member shared an anecdote about his daughter, who was the only Asian student in her school. Her classmates were perplexed, as she didn't fit the usual black or white categories they knew.

Fast forward to 2024, the South has transformed into a melting pot of cultures, thanks in part to a significant influx of Asians and Hispanics. According to the 2020 Census, the South has seen the fastest growth of Asian populations in the U.S. (46% growth in the South between 2010-2020 and 64% growth in North Carolina).

This week marked the annual Culture Night at my daughter's elementary school, Glenwood Elementary. This event is a vibrant showcase of the diverse cultures within our community. My family had the pleasure of hosting the Taiwan booth. Positioned between China and Egypt, with Saudi Arabia nearby, our booth was just one among many, representing various countries like Russia, Poland, Japan, and the Philippines.

Previously, we offered dumplings and spring rolls at our booth, which attendees enjoyed but often without pausing to engage further. This year, we opted for an interactive Q&A, prompting visitors to answer a fun fact about Taiwan found on our poster to receive a free gift. This new approach was a hit, with many lining up to participate and learn.

I am profoundly grateful that my children have the opportunity to grow up in a community that not only celebrates but takes pride in its cultural diversity. It's heartening to see them embracing their heritage with pride.



(By Iris. Y)



(By Iris. Y)

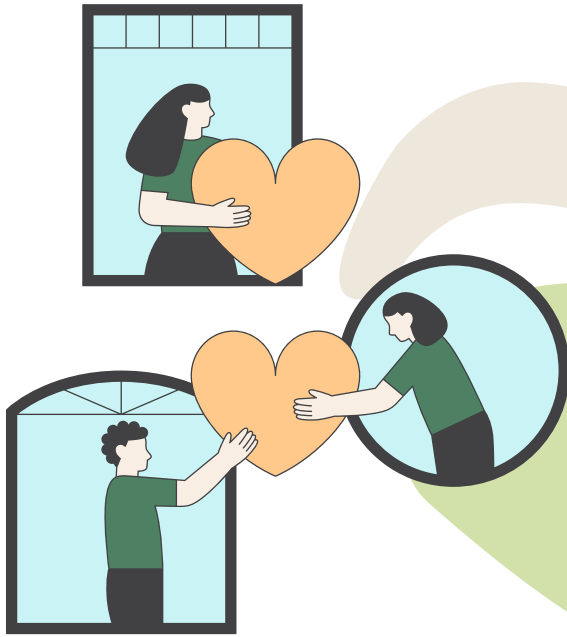


(By Iris. Y)



Did you know Asian Americans are some of the most charitable folks around?

Recently, Pew Research came out with a new survey report, "Asian Americans, Charitable Giving and Remittances", regarding Asian Americans' and their habits of charitable giving and remittances. In the spirit of AAPI Heritage Month, let's dive into the fascinating world of Asian American giving.



Asian American Generosity

(By Brittany. C)

- Most Asian adults (67%) have given to a charitable organization in the U.S., their Asian country of origin, or both. More than 60% of Asian adults, whether foreign-born or US-born, have contributed to a U.S. charity.
- Japanese, Filipino, and Indian adults in the U.S. are more likely to donate to charities compared to other Asian origin groups.
- Immigrants are more likely than U.S.-born Asian adults to donate to charities in their Asian country of origin.
- Charitable giving in the U.S. is influenced by factors such as education, income, and religious affiliation, with higher education and income levels associated with increased giving.
- Asian adults who say religion (Christianity more likely than other religious affiliations) is very important in their life are more likely than those who say it is not too or not at all important to have given to a charity in either of the places asked about.

One non-profit that I've been donating to for many years is St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. Do you give back? If so, which organization or how?

Celebrate the June Pride with South Asian LGBTQ+

(By Caitlyn. G)

As we approach June and LGBTQ+ Pride celebrations, it's worth highlighting the diverse experiences within the Asian community when it comes to gender and sexual identities. There are some notable cultural distinctions that may influence South Asians' perspectives on coming out and living openly.

In South Asian countries like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, the concept of a third gender has existed for centuries in the form of the hijra community. Hijras are officially recognized as neither completely male nor female, transcending the gender binary. Their presence hints at perhaps more established cultural frameworks for gender fluidity and non-binary identities in the region.

Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, a prominent Indian transgender activist, spoke to this history: "The hijra community in India has already carved a semi-open space for the third gender in general public life. This will make the visibility of other LGBTQ subgroups more acceptable."

Of course, levels of acceptance vary significantly across the diversity of Asian cultures, communities, and personal ideologies. However, the premise that South Asians may statistically be more likely to come out rests on the potential openings created by recognizing third genders like hijras over many generations.

As we celebrate Pride's message of affirmation, it's valuable to consider these nuances of cultural context. Increasing knowledge of less-encountered perspectives remains an important path towards greater inclusivity everywhere.

SPOTLIGHT EVENTS

27th Annual Asian American Heritage Festival - Jun 01 - New York, NY

For more details:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Mandala Makers Festival - June 2 - Chicago, IL

For more details:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Deities, Paragons, and Legends - May 26 - July 8 - San Francisco, CA

For more details:

[CLICK HERE](#)