

China



Contrasting Country

China is divided into 22 provinces, five autonomous regions (population no traditional Chinese), four separate municipalities (very large cities), and two “special administrative regions” (once under foreign control)

The government was ruled by emperors until 1912 when it was overthrown by peasants. In 1949, China became a Communist country.

China has huge, modern cities as well as small villages with no running water, shops, and where farmers harvest grain by hand.

China is so large that it covers many different ecosystems. There are islands, mountains, deserts, and plains. The Yangtze River and Yellow River are important waterways.

People in China speak many dialects although the official language is Mandarin. Each Chinese character has a unique sound, and there are four tones for each sound. Tones convey the exact meaning of the word.

Interesting Facts

Population

China has the largest population in the world with over 1.3 billion people.

It comprises 22% of the world’s population.

China is a multi-ethnic country with 56 nationalities.

Han people are the largest population.

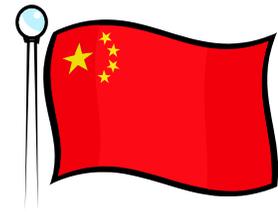
Chinese flag

Red background symbolizes the Communist revolution.

Large star stands for Communist party.

Four smaller stars represent people of China.

Color yellow symbolizes China’s bright future.



Chinatowns

In almost every big city, there is an area where many people from China live.

Chinese customs are kept alive there.

Chinese Writing

Chinese writers use symbols called “characters.” Each one stands for a word.

Combining two characters can make another word.

There were special supplies for writing and drawing in ancient China:

Inkstick (to make Chinese ink, rub an inkstick with water on an inkstone until the ink in the well is as dark as you wish.)



Inkstone

Water jar

Brushes (from hair of rabbit, weasel, or horse).

Writing is in vertical columns read from right to left, top to bottom.

There are over 4,000 Chinese characters.



Symbols and Beliefs

Color red means happiness and good luck.

Imperial yellow – the Emperor’s robes were a special shade of yellow.

Nobody but the Emperor was allowed to wear that color.

The dragon means good luck and power. It was a symbol of ancient China.

The lion is thought to guard against danger. Lion sculptures are often put outside a door. It is good luck to rub a paw as you go by.



Foods – stand for good things in the New Year

tangerines – good fortune

apples – peace

sweet rice cake – more wealth every year

soup – everything better than last year

fish – plenty

chicken – wealth in the new year

mustard greens – a green year for farmers

veggies with long noodles – long life

steamed cakes – spread wealth and happiness

10 ingredient vegetarian dish – all good things

One can make his wishes come true by rubbing the Laughing Buddha’s belly.

The phoenix is considered king of the birds and represents virtue, grace, power and wealth.

The crane symbolizes long life.

The lotus flower symbolizes purity.



Families

Often entire extended family lives in same house.

Children live with parents until married.

Children spend much of their time with family.

Many families have only one child due to the “One Child Policy” passed in 1979.

How to use chopsticks – first used 5,000 years ago

Hold chopstick like a pencil.

Lift away thumb and index finger. Now the bottom stick rests between the thumb and index finger.

Hold top chopstick like a pencil

To pick up food, move the top chopstick. The bottom stick always stays still.



How to grow rice – symbol for life

- Flood rice fields with a few inches of water
 - Plow fields
 - Plant seedlings by hand
 - Weed fields by hand until rice is ready
 - Drain fields and harvest rice
 - Beat grains from stalks. This is called threshing.
 - Send rice on barges to sell in northern parts of China
- (The south was nice for rice. The north was neat for wheat.)



How to brew tea – (tea first brewed in China 2,300 years ago)

- Tips of tea bushes are picked
- Tea leaves are dried and prepared
- Tea is brewed with hot water in teapots
- In ancient China tea was often sipped from bowls instead of cups.



How to make silk

- Feed silkworms. – eat only mulberry leaves
- Let worms spin cocoons out of silk
- Dip cocoons in hot water to dissolve sticky stuff
- Unwind silk fibers
- Spin the thin fibers into thicker threads
- Dye threads
- Weave them into beautiful silk cloth.



How to bow in Ancient China

- Kneel three times
- For each kneel, touch your forehead to the floor three times
- This bow is called ketou or in English, kowtow.

First Invented in China

- Kite – 2,400 years ago
- Umbrella – 1,700 years ago
- Rudder for steering a boat – 2,000 years ago
- Compass for finding direction - more than 1,000 years ago
- Paper - about 2,100 years ago
 - Paper was made by grinding mulberry bark into pulp and spreading it on a screen to dry into sheets.
- Paper money - about 1,000 years ago
 - Before paper money, Chinese coins were made of bronze. They had square holes for stringing.
- Silk – more than 4,000 years ago (Secret was finally smuggled to other countries)
- Crossbow – 2,300 years ago (faster than ordinary bow and arrow.)
- Gunpowder – 1,200 years ago (Arrows could now carry gunpowder charges)



Steel – 1,500 years ago (Swords could be made of steel.)
 Porcelain (fine quality of pottery) – about 1,500 years ago (Because porcelain was invented in China, English call all dishes china.)
 Earthquake detector – about 1,500 years ago (When the earth shakes, metal balls fall into the mouths of toads, and show the direction and strength of the quake.)
 Jade carving – 5,000 years ago
 Kung fu – thousands of years ago
 unarmed – without weapons
 martial – fighting
 art – skill
 Fireworks – first set off in China for celebrations 3,000 years ago
 Printing, movable type, suspension bridge, matches, masts and sails for boats, cast iron, wheelbarrows



Chinese School



School days

School begins in September.
 Students go to school five days a week for nine months.
 Students wear uniforms until high school and then only on certain days.
 One-week breaks are in October and May. Summer break is in July and August.
 Children attend school for nine years: primary six years, primary middle school three years, secondary middle school (like high school) three years.
 Parents pay a small fee in primary school and tuition in high school.

Gao Kao

Test students must pass to go onto college.
 The test also determines where the students will go to college.
 The test is given three days in June.

Education highly respected

Weekends and free time is for schoolwork.
 Children are enrolled in after school and weekend courses.

Games Children Play

Jumping Room –

This game is like hopscotch where children follow a certain order jumping in and out of squares.

Kicking It

This game is like hacky sack where the player kick-bounces an object alone or in a group.

The object (jian zi) looks like a badminton shuttlecock but very colorful.



Chinese Jump Rope

This game is played only by girls
It is like a giant rubber band with two people on the outside holding the rope
in place with their feet.
The jumper jumps and moves in the middle.

Go

This game is the earliest form of chess in the world



Chinese Holidays

Chinese New Year

This holiday is the most important holiday.
Dates change from year to year because based on cycles of the moon.
Dates can be at the end of January or in February.
The celebration lasts 15 days.
The celebration includes family reunions and visiting friends and relatives.
Lots of firecrackers are set off to drive away evil spirits



Chinese New Year Traditions

Fresh start – clean house from top to bottom before New Year’s Eve
Kitchen God – watches over family and week before New Year’s Day reports to
heaven the behavior of the family
Big Feast – knives put away before New Year to avoid cutting good luck
Family share huge meal and say only positive things.
Gifts – children receive little red envelopes with money inside
Lights – last day of the celebration is Lantern Day
People light lanterns and hang them to welcome in spring.
Happy Birthday – seventh day of New Year is everyone’s birthday
Lucky Signs – hang up red banners with wishes for good fortune and happiness
Firecrackers – set off firecrackers to drive away evil spirits
New Year’s Festival – cloth dragon winding down the street
Ends with the beautiful Lantern Festival. The children carry lanterns all
around the village.



The Dragon Boat Festival

Marks the beginning of summer and is between late May and June.
People eat zongzi – fishermen threw into the river to try to keep fish from poet
sticky rice filled with fruit, beans or meat
wrapped with bamboo leaves or reed leaves
tied with strings



Dragon Boat

The boat is between 40-100 feet long.
Up to eighty rowers can fit in one boat.
The boat is like a very long colorful canoe with bow shaped like a dragon head.

Rowers try to grab a flag at the end of the race
Dragon Boat Legend

The race commemorates the memory of the poet Qu Yuan.
Qu Yuan was a king's minister who the king sent away.
The king was defeated in battle so the poet leaped into the river and drowned.



Moon Festival

This festival is a time to give thanks and reunite with family.
It is held between September and October.
The moon shape symbolizes the family circle.
It honors the legend of Moon Goddess.

Families eat under the moon to send good wishes to the goddess.
They eat moon cakes.

symbolize long life and good health
round pastries filled with sweet beans, dried fruit or nuts
center might have duck egg yolk
During Yuan dynasty, revolutionaries sent messages inside cakes.



One-Year-Old Catch

When the baby is a year old articles are placed in front of him/her.
The baby catches the articles he/she likes.
Predictions are made as to its potential interests, future career, and development.

Religions and Philosophy

Taoism

This religion was begun by Lao Zi who was born in 604BC.
Tao created all things but is not a god.
Humans become immortal by doing good works.
Humans must follow rules of nature.
People must live a simple life of compassion and moderation.
All things have their opposites – ying and yang.



Buddhism

This religion came to China from India.
Buddhists believe in reincarnation.
They live life in moderation.
A person becomes free of suffering and reincarnation upon reaching Nirvana.
All living things are equal.
Actions have consequences.



Confucius – uncrowned emperor of China

This is a philosophy rather than a religion.
Confucius was born during the Zhou dynasty.
Be kind to all.
Be honest.
They revere loyalty to the government.
Honor family and parents.
Education is deserved by all.



Feng Shui

This is a philosophy of living in harmony with nature.
It stresses balance and harmony.

Interesting Places

The Great Wall of China

It took thousands of years and millions of workers to build this wall.
At first it was made of mounds of earth with spaces in between. Sometimes it fell down and had to be rebuilt.
It finally became a stone wall 3,000 miles long. It is the largest human-made structure on earth.
The wall was built to keep out invaders.
The wall is one of the seven wonders in the world.
It is one of the largest pieces of military defensive engineering in the world.
It took the longest time to be built, repaired and extended.
The Great Wall stands for the blood, sweat and wisdom of the Chinese people.
It is a sign of their persistence and diligence.



China's Changing Capital

China's capital has moved many times.
In the 11th century it was Kaifeng.
Today it is Beijing. It has been the capital several times over thousands of years.
One needs to visit the ancient Emperor's palace in a walled area called the Forbidden City.
Almost a million tons of Gobi Desert dust blows into Beijing each year.

Terra-cotta Warriors and Horses

The warriors, horses and carriages were discovered in the tomb of the 1st emperor.
They are lifesized and in battle formation.
This is the largest imperial mausoleum and the eighth wonder of the world.

The Forbidden City

This city was the home of 24 emperors.
This palace complex houses 9,999 buildings and is the largest in the world.
Commoners were forbidden to enter this city.



The Summer Palace

It is the most intact imperial garden that has been preserved in China.
Mountains and water are included in it.
The Long Corridor has 8,000 painted scenes.



The Himalayas

This mountain range is the highest in the world.

The Grottoes

These grottoes include Longmen Grottoes, Dunhuang Grottoes, and the Yungang.
They contain more than 100,000 Buddhist statues.



Shanghai

One of the largest cities in China famous for history, culture, and tourism.
It is the hub of trade, finance and culture.
The city is a mixture of East and West, old and new.

Hong Kong

This city is known as a “shopper’s paradise” and “gourmet metropolis”.

Potala Palace

This palace is the residential place of the Dalai Lama, the head of Tibetan Buddhism.

Giant Buddha in Leshan

This Buddha is chiseled out on the cliff of the Lingyun Mountain.
It is a 71 meter tall statue of the Laughing Buddha in a sitting position.
This statue is the biggest stone carving statue in the world.



History

China’s civilization is the oldest continuous civilization in the world.
It dates back 4,000 years.
A dynasty is a hereditary line of emperors or rulers.

Xia Dynasty (2205 – 1776 BC.)

not considered a true dynasty

Shang Dynasty (1766-1122 BC.)

first true dynasty
developed a system of writing
developed bronze

Zhou Dynasty (1122-221BC)

emperor was the authority
feudal system developed
Confucianism and Taoism appeared



Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC)

Shi Huangdi first emperor

built roads, canals, Great Wall

standardized language, writing, measurements and coins



Han Dynasty (207BC – AD220)

honored teachings of Confucius

built Silk Road

invented paper



Three Kingdoms (220-589)

period of division with constant wars

Buddhism important

gunpowder invented



Sui Dynasty (589-618)

unified China

completed building Grand Canal

Tang Dynasty (618-907)

centralized government

legal system

widespread education

Five Dynasties & Ten Kingdoms Period (907-960)

divided into north and south

north - ruled by foreigners with constant fighting

south - ten separate states that grew culturally and economically

Song Dynasty (960-1279)

China reunited

peaceful time

ruled the seas

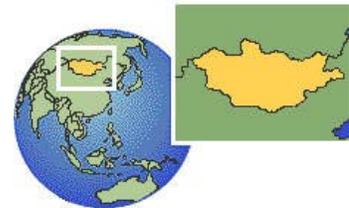
education spread

Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368)

first foreign rule of China

Mongols led by Kublai Khan conquered

Marco Polo and first Europeans came to China



Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

Chinese peasants overthrew Mongols

explorers traveled from China

Qing Dynasty (1644-1912)

Manchu ruled China

prosperous in arts, culture and trade

Chinese men had to wear queue (long braid at back of head)

Republic of China (1912-1949)

Sun Yat-Sen established Republic of China

struggle between Nationalist Party (Chiang-Kai Shek) and Chinese Communist Party (Mao Zedong)

Communists control of China 1949



People's Republic of China

Mao Zedong the first president of China 1949

The Great Leap Forward – established 20,000 communes (failed) 1958-1960

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution – many killed who had beliefs different than the government 1966-1976

Notable People and their Contributions

Confucius

He was known as the great educator.

He believed in benevolence on the part of rulers toward their people.

Most of Chinese people were influenced by him.



Sun Zi

He wrote The Art of War, first work of military science existing in the world.

He said to know your enemy.

He believed in attacking the enemy unexpectedly.

The superior force will defeat the enemy.



Qinshihuang

He was the first emperor in Chinese history.

Zhang Heng

He was one of world's first astronomers.

He invented a seismograph, the first instrument to observe earthquakes.



Hua Tuo

He was the founder of surgery.

He was the first to use anesthesia.

Hua Mulan

She joined the army in place of her father.

She spent 12 years in the army.

She is respected by Chinese as a filial daughter.



Wu Zetian

She was the first and only female monarch in the history of China.

Genghis Khan & Kublai Khan

Mongols conquered and ruled China.

Li Shizhen

He wrote the most scientific description of traditional Chinese medicine.

It is still in use today.



Dr. Sun Yat-sen

He was a revolutionary against the Qing Dynasty.

He was elected Interim President of the Republic of China.

Mao Zedong

He founded the People's Republic of China.

He was a Communist leader.



Chinese Art

Jade

Jade carving is one of the oldest carving arts in China.

Jade is a hard, natural stone mined in China.

It is believed to have mystical properties.

It is carved into many shapes that often have meaning.

bottle – safety

peach – longevity

pair of ducks – love

fish – much money



Chinese Writing and Calligraphy

Calligraphy is the art of writing Chinese characters.

There are five categories of Chinese scripts.

“Four Treasures of the Study” include brush, ink stick, paper, ink stone.

Seal Cutting

Seal cutting is the art of carving on a block of material calligraphy or painting.

Early in history it was a token of pledge or a symbol of power.



Traditional Chinese Painting

Painting is painted on piece of Xuan paper or silk with a Chinese brush.

Subjects are figure painting, landscape painting, flowers and birds.



Chinese Embroidery

It is very elaborate. Sometimes takes five or six people several years to complete. Images are taken from the home region of the artist or traditional Chinese symbols.

It can use 40 ways of needling and 1,000 types of thread.

Embroidery is used in clothing, quilts, pillowcases, sheets or work of art.



Paper-cuts

They are pretty and exquisite with an oriental style.

It is a folk art with a history of more than 2,000 years.

Paper-cuts are mostly created by women in rural areas.

The designs are close to peasant's life.

They are used as decoration during festivals.



Porcelain

Porcelain manufacturing was invented in China.

It is handy for necessities as well as precious arts and crafts.

Fans

There are all types of fans including paper, silk, palm feather, bamboo-knitted.

There are also all types of shapes.

A characteristic is writing poems or drawing pictures on the cover of the fan

The folding fan is the most common.



Kite

The kite was invented by the Chinese.

It was used for military purposes as well as delivering messages.

Various designs include birds, beasts, insects and fish.



Fancy Lantern

They are used as decorations for festivals and holidays.

They are a frame of bamboo strips or metal wire covered with paper or gauze.

They are painted with character or pasted with paper-cuts.

Music – five note scale instead of an eight note scale

Xun is an egg-shaped flute made from clay.

Pipa is a lute with a pear shaped body played by plucking the string back & forth.

Erhu is an instrument with a very long neck and two strings played with a bow.

Operas



Acrobats

Acrobatic performance art dates back more than 2,000 years.

They begin training at very young age.

Skills are handed down through the generations.

Skills include tumbling, magic, dance, juggling, and balance.



Unique Animals

Panda – national treasures in China

Panda cub weighs four ounces.

Pandas live in mountainous regions in Central China.

They eat bamboo leaves, stems, shoots, 26 to 83 lbs. per day.

Pandas are called living fossils.

They have a tame nature and clumsy movements.

The panda is an envoy of peace and friendship.



Takin – hoofed horned animal

It is similar to a big shaggy mountain goat.

It lives in mountain ranges and eats plants.

Males can weigh up to 880 pounds.

South China Tiger

This tiger is possibly extinct in the wild due to loss of habitat.

It lives in southeast China.

It eats mostly large mammals like deer and pigs.

Red Crowned Crane – immortal crane because can live 50-60 years

This crane is famous for long beak, neck and legs.

It has white plumage with red vermillion on head.

There are only 1,200 in the world.



David's Deer

This animal has horns like a deer, head like a horse, body like a donkey, hooves like ox.

Golden Monkey

The golden monkey is known for shiny golden hair.

Its tail is about the same length as its body.

It likes to live in groups.

Chinese Alligator

It is one of the rarest freshwater alligators.

Its original habitat was the Yangtze River.

This alligator is more than two meters long.



Virtues in China

Respecting and taking care of aged parents (filial virtue)

Respecting the aged and loving the young

Three Friends in Cold Weather (pine, bamboo, plum thrive in cold)

Pine – character of strong will

Bamboo – symbol of security

Plum - known for nobleness, purity, modesty

Integrity and Credit

Keeping one's word

Respect Teachers and Value Education



Folk Customs

Names

Surname comes first and is followed by given name.

Names have a certain meaning such as health, longevity, happiness.



Twelve Symbolic Animals in the Chinese calendar

A person born has an animal as his symbolic animal.

Animals include rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, pig

Four Deities – animals symbols of luck and peace

Kylin – kind and moral character regarded as symbol of peace

Phoenix – lucky bird which symbolizes luck, peace and rightness

Tortoise – really exists and is the symbol of longevity

Dragon – symbol of power and dignity



Lion Dance

Singing and dancing performed by hundreds of people.

The Lion Dance is a traditional sport, culture and art.

It is done for festivals and celebrations.

The lucky beast expresses joy and happiness.

This dance summons luck and fortune.



Chinese Life

Clothing

The traditional clothing for ladies is the cheong-sam.

traditional clothing for men – long gown and mandarin jacket

mostly made of silk

traditional bellyband for children – prevent colds, shows naivety

three types of head wear for ladies



Food

Chinese cuisine varies by region.

Chinese cuisine influenced by neighboring countries.

Beginning in 1100BC, Chinese used ice to keep foods – also pickled and smoked.



Northern China – noodles, dumplings, steamed buns
Bird's Nest Soup – made from a bird's nest
Western China – hot and spicy dishes
Eastern China – fish, sweet potatoes, rice, corn, peaches and chicken
Southern China – stir-fry dishes with lots of rice, vegetables, soy sauce & ginger
Rice – world's top producer of rice (40,000 different types)
 served in some form at almost all meals
 considered main part of the meal
Soy sauce – invented in China
Tea – drinking tea for at least 4,000 years
 green tea – untreated before baking
 black tea – leaves fermented before baking
 Wulong tea – partially fermented
 scented tea – leaves mixed with flower petals
Dim Sum – snacks served with tea
 2,000 different dishes



Chinese Medicine

traditional Chinese medicine mainly comes from plants
acupuncture and moxibustion therapy widely used in China



Chinese language

standard language of Chinese is Mandarin
many dialects spoken

