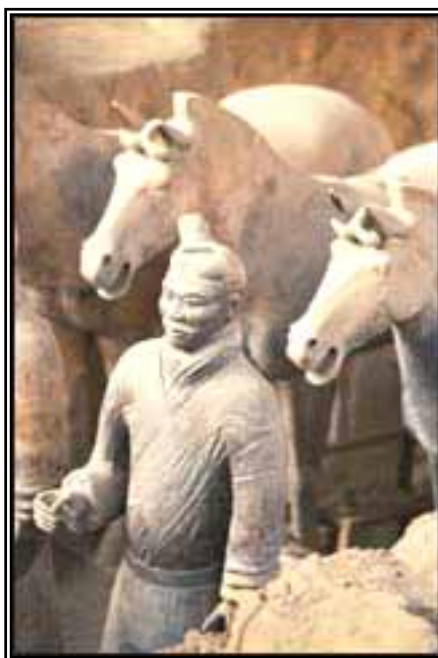
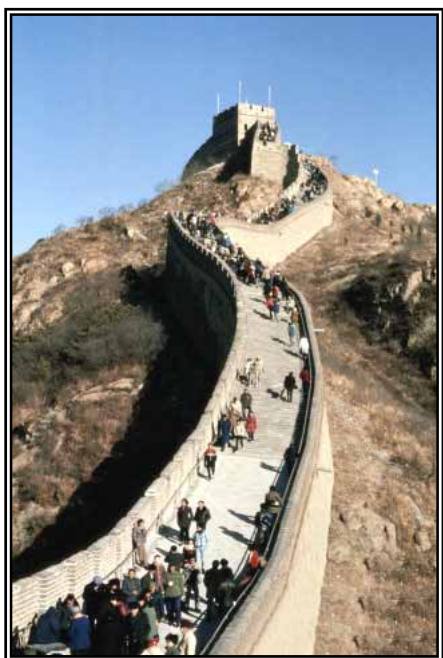


BIG FIVE

TOURS & EXPEDITIONS

Enriching Lives Through Distinctive Journeys

People's Republic of China



The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions and answers to some frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be the definitive guide for your trip.



Beijing ~ Elevation: 180 feet Latitude: 39 56N Longitude: 116 17E												
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	26	31	43	57	68	76	79	77	69	57	41	30
Average Precipitation												
In.	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.7	1.3	3.1	8.8	6.7	2.3	0.7	0.4	0.1
Shanghai ~ Elevation: 23 feet Latitude: 31 10N Longitude: 121 26E												
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	40	42	48	59	68	75	83	82	75	66	55	44
Xian ~ Elevation: 1306 feet Latitude: 34 18N Longitude: 108 55E												
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	32	35	46	57	66	77	80	77	66	57	44	33
Average Precipitation												
In.	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	0.3	0.4	1	1.8	2.4	2.1	3.7	3.3	4	2.3	1	0.3

WEATHER

Spring (March-April) and autumn (Sept-Oct) are the best times to visit China. Daytime temperatures range from 68-86 degrees Fahrenheit in these seasons, but nights can be cold and wet. Temperatures in northern China can drop to -40 F in winter (December-March) and rise to 38 C (100.4 F) in summer (May-August).

China lies mainly in the northern Temperate Zone but great climatic differences can be found from region to region due to the country's sheer size. Hot, humid summers in the far south stretch from April to September, and coincide with the rainy season in the north. The northwest experiences dry, hot summers, with China's hottest place - Turpan - receiving maximums of 47 degrees Celsius (116 F). Winters here are as formidably cold as in the rest of northern China. The northern part of Heilongjiang Province in northeast China has no summer; Hainan Island has a long summer but no winter; the Huaihe River valley features four distinct seasons; the western part of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is covered with snow year round; and the southern part of the Yunan-Guizhou Plateau is spring-like all year. The central Yangzi River valley experiences extreme seasonal temperatures.

Annual precipitation also varies greatly from region to region, from as high as 1,500 millimeters along the southeastern coast to less than 50 millimeters in northwest China. Typhoons can hit the southeast coast between July and September. From September and October to March and April, monsoons come from Siberia and the Mongolia Plateau into China. In summer, monsoons blow into China from the ocean, bringing warm currents and rain.

TIME ZONES & TRAVELING TIME

Beijing is GMT plus eight hours. It is 15 hours ahead of San Francisco. All time within China is set to Beijing time. China does not observe Daylight Savings Time. Flight time to Beijing is approximately 12 hours from Los Angeles.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passports: For international travel, a U.S. passport valid for at least six months from date of departure, containing **at least two blank pages** are necessary.

Visas: Big Five Tours & Expeditions has appointed Zierer Visa Service (ZVS) to process required visas for our passengers. The Visa Application Kit is included with your pre-trip confirmation packet. You can also download the necessary forms from the website: <http://www.zvs.com>. Click on the "members" section to log in. For user name, enter **bigfive**, and the password is **55509**. You will enter the visa section for Big Five Tours & Expeditions. Here you will find a list of country-specific forms. You will also discover useful hints.

Important: Please check your passport before you submit it for your visa to insure that:

- 1) It is valid for at least six months after the date of travel.
- 2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa stamps that will be added as you travel in and out of various countries.

Please note: Pages reserved for amendments and endorsements cannot be used for visas.

AIRPORT FORMALITIES

Beijing Capital International Airport is located 18 miles (28 km) northeast of the center of Beijing. If you are traveling on your own, here are some things to consider. Tourist information is available in the arrivals' lounge. Reconfirmation of departure

reservations is essential. Travelers who have not reconfirmed have been stranded when outgoing flights are overbooked.

Airport Tax: You need to pay airport tax when you depart from any cities in China via air. Departure tax, payable at a booth near check-in, on all domestic flights is 50Yuan (US\$6.00), International, 90 Yuan (US\$12.00).

CUSTOMS

Upon arrival in China, visitors must fill in a luggage declaration form at the customs and have luggage inspected. Customs rules require an accounting of all valuables including watches, jewelry, cameras and currency that you bring into the country. It would be wise to keep all receipts with the correlating items. A copy of this document is surrendered on departure and anything missing may be treated as imported, with duty applied accordingly. Make sure you obtain a police report for any goods stolen during your stay. Tourists are not allowed to take objects out of China for other people.

Duty-Free Items: Customs allows visitors to bring in 400 cigarettes and two, 75cl bottles of alcoholic beverages.

Prohibited Items: All narcotics (hemp, opium, cocaine, morphine, heroin, etc.), firearms, obscene literature, pictures or articles. Like most Asian nations, **penalties for drug trafficking in China are severe.**

US CUSTOMS

Returning U.S. residents are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. Regulations frequently change. For the most up to date information, you can write to the U.S. Customs Service, Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044, contact your local Customs office, or go to the homepage for Customs & Border Protection at: www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/home.xml.

LUGGAGE

Traveling light is always the first and best rule! We recommend passengers limit their luggage to one medium-sized soft bag per person or two small duffle bags. In this security conscious era, airline luggage restrictions may change without notice. Also, luggage limits vary depending on ticket class, plane size, destinations, etc. It is always best to confirm with airlines for specific limitations.

Generally speaking, from the US, economy class passengers are allowed to check in two (2) normal size pieces of luggage (each piece measuring no more than about 62 linear inches, which means length plus width plus height), and not exceeding 70 pounds per bag.

Most airlines now allow only one carry-on bag in addition to one personal item such as a laptop or handbag. Most bags within the 22 x 14 x 9 (or, a total of 45 linear inches) size restriction will be considered legal carry-on size by major domestic U.S. airlines. Many US airlines check-in desks have sizing boxes within which your bag must fit.

Scheduled flights from other countries and within foreign countries generally limit luggage to 44 pounds total, plus one carry-on personal item. Further restrictions apply for charter flights. We will advise you of those restrictions in your final documents.

All luggage should have identification inside as well as secure baggage tags on the outside. Please note that the US National Transportation and Safety Board now suggests that you do not lock your checked luggage. If a screener has to open your bag, the locks may have to be broken. This applies to flights within the US and international flights originating in the US.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Currently, there are no required vaccinations, unless you are coming from an infected area, in which case you will be required to have a yellow fever certificate. Please check the latest regulations with your local health office or National Center for Disease Control, Atlanta, GA Tel: 404-332-4559. <http://www.cdc.gov/>.

Note: If you are on medication, be sure to bring enough for the duration of the trip, but not an excessive amount that would raise suspicion. Also, it's a good idea to ask your doctor for a note detailing the drugs you are taking. **For Customs inspections, you must have medications in their original containers.*

DEALING WITH JET LAG

With the joys and adventures of international travel come certain unavoidable inconveniences such as occasional lost luggage or bouts of jet lag. In fact, studies reveal that as much as 90% of long distance travelers experience a degree of jet lag.

Jet lag describes that out-of-sorts feeling associated with long flights, particularly those across time zones. Symptoms and severity vary but may include drowsiness, fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, headaches, insomnia, and swelling of the extremities.

The number of time zones crossed affects the severity of jet lag. The internal body clock follows circadian rhythm, which is controlled by the hypothalamus that processes nerve signals. That clock is designed for regular cycles of light and darkness. Depending on the number of time zones crossed, it may take several days for that rhythm to be restored.

But that is not the only influence. Other factors include cabin pressure, stale air, lack of humidity, and your overall physical condition at the beginning of your trip.

Although jet lag can not be completely avoided, there are some simple things you can do to help minimize its affects.

Consider the following for your next scheduled trip:

- Start your trip well rested with a good night's sleep prior to departure. Getting adequate rest before starting on your journey will help minimize the amount of catching up you'll have to do when you arrive at the destination. Once home, try to schedule a day of rest before returning to work.
- Drink plenty of fluids -- water and juices will help you to stay well hydrated. Seasoned travelers recommend that you carry a bottle of drinking water with you and drink eight ounces every hour.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine just before and during flights. Both possess diuretic properties that promote dehydration. Alcohol also causes drowsiness and contributes to feeling sluggish.
- Once settled onboard, reset your watch to the time zone to which you are traveling. This small act helps you begin adjusting to your destination's local time. As much as possible, create a dark environment during flight. Studies have shown that bright lights strongly affect individuals' body clocks. If necessary, try eye shades and earplugs to help block distractions and convince your body that it is nighttime. Closing window shades and turning off overhead lights may also help. Sleep on the plane if your flight has an early morning arrival time.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes that will help in the event you experience mild swelling. Experienced travelers often bring lightweight slippers to wear during flights.
- Although not always feasible, look for opportunities to walk around while in flight. Do simple isometric exercises (contracting and relaxing as many muscle groups as possible) in your seat. These will improve circulation, help promote increased alertness, and reduce chances of swelling.

- If you arrive in the morning, plan to stay awake. If possible, wait until the local bedtime to sleep. Many people swear that this is key in determining how quickly they adapt to local conditions. You will sleep better and will be less likely to suffer insomnia than if you nap upon arrival.
- During extended stopovers, showers are sometimes available. If you have the opportunity, shower. Trans-Pacific pilots report that taking a shower in Hawaii helps them recover more quickly from the general effects of jet lag after the flight.

SAFETY

When visiting cities in China, or any country, common sense should be the guiding principle. China is considered one of the safest countries in the world in which to travel. Crime is very low, with virtually no crimes committed against tourists. Even in late evening hours, travelers need have little concern. The Chinese are friendly and hospitable, and their laws are strict. Hotels provide in-room safes or locked security boxes at the front desk. Leave valuables at the hotel. When in particularly crowded areas and while traveling through airports, train or bus stations, keep an eye on your baggage. If there is a problem report it immediately to a security guard or the police. Lost or stolen passports should be reported to the local police and the U.S. Embassy in U.S. Embassy Consular Section in China is located at 2 Xiu Shui Dong Jie, Beijing – 100600. Telephone: (86-10) 6532-3431, 6532-3831, and after-hours: (86-10) 6532-1910; fax (86-10) 6532-4153, 6532-3178. The U.S. Embassy Internet address is www.embassy-china.org.cn.

BANKING/CURRENCY

Foreign currency and travelers' checks can be changed at the main branches of the Bank of China, tourist hotels, Friendship Stores, and some department stores. Hotels usually charge the official rate. You will need to keep your exchange receipts if you want to change any remaining RMB at the end of your trip. Travelers' checks are useful because the exchange rate is more favorable than for cash; Thomas Cook, American Express and Bank of America are most commonly accepted.

Credit cards are gaining ground in China: Visa, MasterCard, American Express (with branches in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Xiamen), JCB, and Diners Club the most common. Cards can be used in most mid- to top-range hotels, and department stores, but cannot be used to finance your transportation costs. Cash advances can be made at head branches of the Bank of China (for 4% commission).

COMMUNICATION

Languages: As a written language, Chinese has been used for about 4,000 years. There are seven major Chinese dialects and many sub-dialects. Mandarin (or Putonghua), the predominant dialect, is spoken by over 70% of the population. It is taught in all schools and is used by the government. About two-thirds of the Han ethnic group are native speakers of Mandarin; the rest, concentrated in southwest and southeast China, speak one of the six other major Chinese dialects. Non-Chinese languages spoken widely by ethnic minorities include Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur and other Turkic languages (in Xinjiang), and Korean (in the northeast).

Telephones: Telephone communication within China is good and getting better as the national system upgrades to fiber-optic cable. Travelers can communicate easily with home or office via telephone, fax, telex, and Internet (where available). Hotels usually offer free local calls, although travelers should check as some do have a small charge, even if there is no answer. Public phones are available in many shops, restaurants, and on the street. International direct-dial (IDD) telephone service is available from almost any telephone in the major cities, or from

hotels and phone centers in secondary cities. (Be sure to give incoming callers your room number, since it is sometimes hard for receptionists to understand foreign names). Internet connections are currently available in some hotels, and many more are installing them to accommodate business travelers.

ELECTRICITY

AC 220 V, 50 Hz. Bathrooms of many luxury and medium-grade hotels may have 110-volt sockets.

BUSINESS HOURS

Government offices are open Monday – Friday, 8am to 5pm with an hour for lunch. Businesses usually open about 8 or 8:30 a.m. and close about 7:30 or 8:00 p.m. Offices are closed for an hour for lunch generally between 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Supper is served about 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.

CLOTHING

What to Wear: Pack light and leave your jewelry at home. Bring casual clothes. Wash-and-wear clothing is preferable. Hotels in China offer reliable laundry and dry cleaning services. Comfortable walking shoes are a must! For more formal dinners, please dress appropriately. Men may want to bring a coat and tie or a couple of nice polo shirts and slacks. Women can get by with a dress, skirt and top, or pant suits for most formal occasions. Casual clothing is acceptable for tourists, but when visiting special places **do not** wear short shorts, halter-tops, cut-offs or muscle shirts.

In winter, be prepared for cold weather. Bring a couple of shirts, sweaters, and a jacket (depending on the season) that can be worn in layers to accommodate China's range of climates.

Proper Attire: Please be sure to observe appropriate dress codes when visiting religious sanctuaries, buildings, sites, or palaces, where modesty is the rule. If you are inappropriately dressed, you may not be allowed to enter.

SHOPPING

In China, bargaining is definitely acceptable. You may bargain in shops, street stalls, and hotels - but not in large stores. You will find a vast selection of boutique shops, department stores, and hotel shopping arcades that sell everything from silks and porcelains to antique screens and traditional Chinese herbal medicines. Or, try bargain hunting at one of the new "free markets" that are springing up all over the country. Throughout China, shops offer unique ceramics, paintings, stone rubbings, embroideries, carpets, furniture, jade carvings, custom-carved signature chops, antiques, books, and much more. Shop personnel will often pack and arrange for shipping bulky purchases back home. Prices are usually clearly marked in stores and shops, and English is spoken in most tourist areas. Don't miss browsing through one of the state-run Friendship Stores; they are still some of the best places to find an excellent selection of quality merchandise, plus you'll find a complete supermarket of Chinese delicacies to bring to friends back home.

FOOD & DRINK

Drinking Water: Only a few luxury hotels provide drinkable tap water. Most hotels supply boiled water in thermos bottles. Bottled water is widely available.

Local Cuisine: With the influence and energy of 56 ethnic minority groups, it's no wonder that authentic Chinese food is not only delicious but amazing for its variety. Variations on Chinese dishes can be found in nearly every corner of the world. Be sure to sample as many of China's regional creations as possible during the trip. For a real change of pace, stop by one of the food stalls at the local night market, and join neighborhood residents

in sampling delicious fresh local foods. It will be a memorable evening. You are always welcome to join diners at local restaurants and teahouses in any city or town. (Note: hygiene is quite good in China, even at food vendor stalls on the street. The possibility of an upset stomach is the exception, not the rule.)

For international fare, American, Italian, Japanese, Thai, Indian, Korean, German, and French restaurants can be found at many up-scale hotels and in shopping areas around Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong.

Note: If you have food allergies or are on a special/restricted diet, please notify your travel agent or our office in advance, so that we may try to comply with your needs. Also, please advise your travel agent or our office if you have any mobility restrictions, so that we may inform our representatives accordingly. They will always strive to accommodate you to the best of their ability.

CHINESE CULTURE

Names / Greetings: A slight bow is appropriate when meeting someone. A handshake is also acceptable. The Chinese are quite formal and will use full title of guests during introductions. Chinese surnames precede given names. For example, "Wang Jianhua" would be addressed as "Mr. Wang". Do not address Chinese by their given names or nicknames, unless you have already developed a relationship based on first names.

Chinese people are not physically demonstrative and may misunderstand hugging, backslapping and other such behavior. Putting hands in ones mouth (biting fingernails, removing food from teeth, etc.) is offensive. Flirting and open displays of affection are also frowned upon. Staring, on the other hand, is common and acceptable, and reflects a natural curiosity.

Tippling: In the past, Chinese considered tipping anyone an insult, although exceptions are starting to appear.

Dining: If invited to share a meal, guests should plan to arrive a little early and leave shortly after the meal. During the meal, be prepared with toasts expressing thanks, pleasure, and friendship. It is polite to sample every dish, and when eating rice, it is customary to hold the bowl close to your mouth.

Gift Giving: Gifts of any great value can cause embarrassment and usually are not accepted by the Chinese.

Religious Sites: Remember to show respect when touring religious sites. For example, each image of Buddha, large or small, ruined or not, is regarded as a sacred object. **Never** climb onto one to take a photograph or do anything that might indicate lack of respect. Also, please note that Buddhist monks are forbidden to touch or be touched by a woman, or to accept anything from a woman's hand. If a woman must give anything to a monk, she first hands it to a man, who then presents it.

Note: You may wear shoes when walking around the compound of a Buddhist temple, but **not** inside the chapel where the principal Buddha image is kept.

In a Muslim mosque, men should wear hats and women should be well covered with slacks or a long skirt, a long-sleeved blouse buttoned to the neck, and a scarf over the hair. All should remove their shoes before entering the mosque and should not be present if there is a religious gathering.

HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Dynastic Period: China is the oldest continuous major world civilization, with records dating back about 3,500 years. Successive dynasties developed a system of bureaucratic control that gave the agrarian-based Chinese an advantage over neighboring nomadic and hill cultures. Chinese civilization was further strengthened by the development of a Confucian state

ideology and a common written language that bridged the gaps among the country's many local languages and dialects. Whenever nomadic tribes conquered China, as it was by the Mongols in the 13th century, the conquerors sooner or later adopted the ways of the "higher" Chinese civilization and staffed the bureaucracy with Chinese.

The last dynasty was established in 1644, when the nomadic Manchus overthrew the native Ming dynasty and established the Qing dynasty with Beijing as its capital. At great expense in blood and treasure, the Manchus over the next half-century gained control of many border areas, including Xinjiang, Yunnan, Tibet, Mongolia, and Taiwan. The success of the early Qing period was based on the combination of Manchu martial prowess and traditional Chinese bureaucratic skills.

During the 19th century, Qing control weakened, and prosperity diminished. China suffered massive social strife, economic stagnation, explosive population growth, and Western penetration and influence. The Taiping and Nian rebellions, along with a Russian-supported Muslim separatist movement in Xinjiang, drained Chinese resources and almost toppled the dynasty. Britain's desire to continue its illegal opium trade with China collided with imperial edicts prohibiting the drug, and the First Opium War erupted in 1840. China lost the war; subsequently, Britain and other Western powers, including the United States, forcibly occupied "concessions" and gained special commercial privileges. Hong Kong was ceded to Britain in 1842 under the Treaty of Nanking, and when the Opium Wars finally ended, Britain executed a 99-year lease of the New Territories, significantly expanding the size of Hong Kong.

As time went on, the Western powers, wielding superior military technology, gained more economic and political privileges. Reformist Chinese officials argued for the adoption of Western technology to strengthen the dynasty and counter Western advances, but the Qing court played down both the Western threat and the benefits of Western technology.

Early 20th Century China: Frustrated by the Qing court's resistance to reform, young officials, military officers, and students -- inspired by the revolutionary ideas of Sun Yat-sen -- began to advocate the overthrow of the Qing dynasty and creation of a republic. A revolutionary military uprising on October 10, 1911, led to the abdication of the last Qing monarch. As part of a compromise to overthrow the dynasty without a civil war, the revolutionaries and reformers allowed high Qing officials to retain prominent positions in the new republic. One of these figures, General Yuan Shikai, was chosen as the republic's first president. Before his death in 1916, Yuan unsuccessfully attempted to name himself emperor. His death left the republican government all but shattered, ushering in the era of the "warlords" during which China was ruled and ravaged by shifting coalitions of competing provincial military leaders.

In the 1920s, Sun Yat-sen established a revolutionary base in south China and set out to unite the fragmented nation. With Soviet assistance, he organized the Kuomintang (KMT or "Chinese Nationalist People's Party"), and entered into an alliance with the fledgling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). After Sun's death in 1925, one of his protégés, Chiang Kai-shek, seized control of the KMT and succeeded in bringing most of south and central China under its rule. In 1927, Chiang turned on the CCP and executed many of its leaders. The remnants fled into the mountains of eastern China. In 1934, driven out of their mountain bases, the CCP's forces embarked on a "Long March" across China's most desolate terrain to the northwest, where they established a guerrilla base at Yan'an in Shaanxi Province.

During the "Long March," the Communists reorganized under a new leader, Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung). The bitter struggle between the KMT and the CCP continued openly or clandestinely through the 14-year long Japanese invasion (1931-45), even though the two parties nominally formed a united front

to oppose the Japanese invaders in 1937. The war between the two parties resumed after the Japanese defeat in 1945. By 1949, the CCP occupied most of the country.

Chiang Kai-shek fled with the remnants of his KMT government and military forces to Taiwan, where he proclaimed Taipei to be China's "provisional capital" and vowed to reconquer the Chinese mainland. The KMT authorities on Taiwan still call themselves the "Republic of China."

The People's Republic of China: In Beijing, on October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China. The new government assumed control of a people exhausted by two generations of war and social conflict, and an economy ravaged by high inflation and disrupted transportation links. A new political and economic order modeled on the Soviet example was quickly installed.

In the early 1950s, China undertook a massive economic and social reconstruction. The new leaders gained popular support by curbing inflation, restoring the economy, and rebuilding many war-damaged industrial plants. The CCP's authority reached into almost every phase of Chinese life. Party control was assured by large, politically loyal security and military forces; a government apparatus responsive to party direction; and ranks of party members in labor, women's, and other mass organizations.

The "Great Leap Forward" and the Sino-Soviet Split: In 1958, Mao broke with the Soviet model and announced a new economic program, the "Great Leap Forward," aimed at rapidly raising industrial and agricultural production. Giant cooperatives (communes) were formed, and "backyard factories" dotted the Chinese landscape. The results were disastrous. Normal market mechanisms were disrupted, agricultural production fell behind, and China's people exhausted themselves producing what turned out to be shoddy, unsellable goods. Within a year, starvation appeared even in fertile agricultural areas. From 1960 to 1961, the combination of poor planning and bad weather resulted in famine.

The already strained Sino-Soviet relationship deteriorated sharply in 1959, when the Soviets started to restrict the flow of scientific and technological information to China. The dispute escalated, and the Soviets withdrew all of their personnel from China in August 1960. The feuding countries began to have disputes openly in international forums.

The Cultural Revolution: In the early 1960s, State President Liu Shaoqi and his protégé, Party General Secretary Deng Xiaoping, took over direction of the party and adopted pragmatic economic policies at odds with Mao's revolutionary vision. Dissatisfied with China's new direction and his own reduced authority, Party Chairman Mao launched a massive political attack on Liu, Deng, and other pragmatists in the spring of 1966. The new movement, the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," was unprecedented in communist history. For the first time, a section of the Chinese communist leadership sought to rally popular opposition against another leadership group. China was set on a course of political and social anarchy that lasted nearly a decade.

Early in the Cultural Revolution, Mao and his "closest comrade in arms," National Defense Minister Lin Biao, charged Liu, Deng, and other top party leaders with dragging China back toward capitalism. Radical youth organizations, called Red Guards, attacked party and state organizations at all levels, seeking out leaders who would not bend to the radical wind. In reaction to this turmoil, some local People's Liberation Army (PLA) commanders and other officials maneuvered to outwardly back Mao and the radicals while actually taking steps to rein in local radical activity.

Gradually, Red Guard and other radical activity subsided, and the political situation stabilized along complex factional lines. Leadership conflict came to a head in September

1971, when Party Vice Chairman and Defense Minister Lin Biao reportedly tried to stage a coup against Mao; Lin Biao allegedly later died in a plane crash in Mongolia.

In the aftermath, many officials who had been criticized and dismissed during 1966-69 were reinstated. Chief among these was Deng Xiaoping, who reemerged in 1973 and was confirmed in 1975 in the concurrent posts of Politburo Standing Committee member, PLA Chief of Staff, and Vice Premier.

The ideological struggle between more pragmatic, veteran party officials and the radicals reemerged with a vengeance in late 1975. Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, and three close Cultural Revolution associates (later dubbed the "Gang of Four") launched a media campaign against Deng. In January 1976, Premier Zhou Enlai, a popular political figure, died of cancer. On April 5, Beijing citizens staged a spontaneous demonstration in Tiananmen Square in Zhou's memory, with strong political overtones in support of Deng. The authorities forcibly suppressed the demonstration. Deng was blamed for the disorder and stripped of all official positions, although he retained his party membership.

The Post-Mao Era: Mao's death in September '76 removed a towering figure from Chinese politics and set off a scramble for succession. Former minister of public security Hua Guofeng was quickly confirmed as party chairman and premier. A month after Mao's death, Hua, backed by the PLA, arrested Jiang Qing and other members of the "Gang of Four." After extensive deliberations, the Chinese Communist Party leadership reinstated Deng Xiaoping to all of his previous posts at the 11th Party Congress in August '77. Deng then led the effort to place government control in the hands of veteran party officials opposed to the radical excesses of the previous two decades.

The new, pragmatic leadership emphasized economic development and renounced mass political movements. At the pivotal December 1978 Third Plenum (of the 11th party congress central committee), the leadership adopted economic reform policies aimed at expanding rural income and incentives, encouraging experiments in enterprise autonomy, reducing central planning, and establishing direct foreign investment in China. The plenum also decided to accelerate the pace of legal reform, culminating in the passage of several new legal codes by the National People's Congress in June '79.

After 1979, the Chinese leadership moved toward more pragmatic positions in almost all fields. The party encouraged artists, writers, and journalists to adopt more critical approaches, although open attacks on party authority were not permitted. In late 1980, Mao's Cultural Revolution was officially proclaimed a catastrophe. Hua Guofeng, a protege of Mao, was replaced as Premier in 1980 by reformist Sichuan party chief Zhao Ziyang and as party General Secretary in 1981 by the even more reformist Communist Youth League chairman Hu Yaobang.

Reform policies brought great improvements in the standard of living, especially for urban workers and for farmers who took advantage of opportunities to diversify crops and establish village industries. Literature and arts blossomed, and Chinese intellectuals established extensive links with scholars in other countries. At the same time, however, political dissent as well as social problems such as inflation, urban migration, and prostitution emerged. Although students and intellectuals urged greater reforms, some party elders increasingly questioned the pace and the ultimate goals of the reform program.

In December of 1986, student demonstrators, taking advantage of the loosening political atmosphere, staged protests against the slow pace of reform, confirming party elders' fear that the current reform program was leading to social instability. Hu Yaobang, a protege of Deng and a leading advocate of reform, was blamed for the protests and forced to resign as CCP General Secretary in January 1987. Premier Zhao Ziyang was made

General Secretary and Li Peng, former Vice Premier and Minister of Electric Power and Water Conservancy, was made Premier.

1989 Student Movement and Tiananmen Square: After Zhao became the party General Secretary, the economic and political reforms he had championed came under increasing attack. His proposal in May 1988 to accelerate price reform led to widespread popular complaints about rampant inflation and gave opponents of rapid reform the opening to call for greater centralization of economic controls and stricter prohibitions against Western influence. This precipitated a political debate, which grew more heated through the winter of 1988-89.

The death of Hu Yaobang on April 15, 1989, coupled with growing economic hardship caused by high inflation, provided the backdrop for a large-scale protest movement by students, intellectuals, and other parts of a disaffected urban population. University students and other citizens in Beijing camped out at Tiananmen Square to mourn Hu's death and to protest against those who would slow reform. Their protests, which grew despite government efforts to contain them, called for an end to official corruption and for defense of freedoms guaranteed by the Chinese Constitution. Protests also spread through many other cities, including Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Martial law was declared on May 20, 1989. Late on July 3 and early on the morning of June 4, military units were brought into Beijing. They used armed force to clear demonstrators from the streets. There are no official estimates of deaths in Beijing, but most observers believe that casualties numbered in the hundreds.

After June 4, while foreign governments expressed horror at the brutal suppression of the demonstrators, the central government eliminated remaining sources of organized opposition, detained large numbers of protesters, and required political reeducation not only for students but also for large numbers of party cadre and government officials.

Following the resurgence of conservatives in the aftermath of June 4, economic reform slowed until given new impetus by Deng Xiaoping's dramatic visit to southern China in early 1992. Deng's renewed push for a market-oriented economy received official sanction at the 14th Party Congress later in the year as a number of younger, reform-minded leaders began their rise to top positions. Deng and his supporters argued that managing the economy in a way that increased living standards should be China's primary policy objective, even if "capitalist" measures were adopted. Subsequent to the visit, the Communist Party Politburo publicly issued an endorsement of Deng's policies of economic openness. Though not completely eschewing political reform, China has consistently placed overwhelming priority on the opening of its economy.

Third Generation of LEADERS: Deng's health deteriorated in the years prior to his death in 1997. During that time, President Jiang Zemin and other members of his generation gradually assumed control of the day-to-day functions of government. This "third generation" leadership governs collectively with President Jiang at the center.

In March 1998, Jiang was re-elected President during the 9th National People's Congress. Premier Li Peng was constitutionally required to step down from that post. He was elected to the chairmanship of the National People's Congress. Zhu Rongji was selected to replace Li as Premier.

China is firmly committed to economic reform and opening to the outside world. Chinese leadership has identified reform of state industries as a government priority. Government strategies for achieving that goal include large-scale privatization of unprofitable state-owned enterprises. The leadership has also downsized the government bureaucracy. (From U.S. Dept. of State Resources)

INTRODUCTION TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The People's Republic of China is a land of vast contradictions and ancient history. China, one of the four oldest civilizations in the world, has a written history of 6,000 years and boasts rich cultural relics and historical sites. Its inventions include the compass, paper-making, gunpowder, and printing. The Great Wall, Grand Canal, and Karez irrigation system are three great ancient engineering projects built 2,000 years ago, now symbols of the rich culture of this nation.

China has all types of terrain from plains, deltas, and hills in the east to mountains, high plateaus, and deserts in the west. The Pacific Ocean forms its eastern border. It has an area of 9.6 million sq km, or one-fifteenth of the world's landmass. It begins from the confluence of the Heilong and Wusuli rivers in the east and runs about 5,200 kilometers to the Pamirs west of Wuqia County in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The northern boundary begins about the Heilong River north of Mohe and extends about 5,500 kilometers to the southernmost island of Zengmu'ansha in the South China Sea.

China's land borders stretch more than 22,000 kilometers, and its coastline extends well over 18,000 kilometers. Major cities include the capital of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Shenyang, Wuhan, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Harbin, and Chengdu.

Beijing: Beijing is a capital of the Republic of China, and is home to 11 million people. Throughout China's history, it has often served as the main stage for events. Beijing has attracted people from all over the world to see its historical and cultural treasures.

In 1215 AD, Genghis Khan sacked Beijing, setting fire to and slaughtering everything in sight. Sixty-four years later, his grandson, Kublai Khan, made himself ruler of most of Asia. Zhu Yanhang, a mercenary, led a successful uprising in 1368 that ushered in the Ming Dynasty. His son, Yong Le, is responsible for many structures such as the Forbidden City and Tiantan.

But by the end of the 19th century, Beijing had begun to experience sometimes violent changes resulting from the fall of Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China. In 1937, the Japanese occupied Beijing. This was followed by a civil war between the CCP and Kuomintang. Finally in 1949 the People's Republic of China was established.

The Forbidden City, which was the center of power in the Middle Kingdom for more than 500 years, was off-limits to everyone except royalty for nearly all of its history. Two dynasties of emperors -- the Ming and the Qing -- called the walled complex home. Tiantan Park, meaning the Temple of Heaven, personifies the aura of the Ming architecture. Tiantan was considered highly sacred ground and it was there that the emperor performed the major ceremony of the year. The Summer Palace is also one of the finest sights in Beijing. The royal garden was enlarged and embellished by Emperor Qianling in 18th century, and Empress Dowager Cixi began rebuilding it in 1888. She used the palace as a summer resort.

Beijing is surely well known for "The Great Wall of China". The original walls began 2000 years ago during the Qin Dynasty, when China was unified under Emperor Qin Shihuang. He built it to keep out marauding nomads, using hundreds of thousands of workers, many of them political prisoners. It required 10 years of hard labor to build it. Because of the history, the wall has often been a symbol of tyranny. But the wall never did perform its function as a defense line. Instead, the wall worked as a kind of elevated highway, transporting men and equipment across mountainous terrain. But the wall was largely forgotten after that, and rescued mainly by the tourist industry.

Today, visitors enjoy local cultural events such as performances by the Beijing Opera or acrobatic troupes. Chinese acrobatic troupes are among the best in the world, and the best place to catch them is at the Chaoyang Theater.

Wuhan: Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province, is the largest city in Central China. It maintains a population of 7.3 million and covers more than 8,400 square kilometers. It is economic, cultural, and political heart of Central China.

The city is actually a conglomeration of what were once three independent cities -- Wuchang, Hankou, and Hanyang. With the building of the Beijing-Wuhan railway in the 20s, Hankou really began to expand and became the first major industrial center in the interior.

Wuhan is a major port on the Yangtzi River. Today, two airports, two international harbors, several national railways, and a highway make Wuhan a transportation hub. It is third in the country in the field of Science and Technology with more than 500 research institutes and universities located in the region.

In modern history, Wuhan served as occasional home to one of China's most legendary modern figures, Mao Zedong's villa, which consisted of living quarters, offices, private swimming pool, and meeting. Mao stayed here more than 20 times between 1960 and 1974, including nearly 18 months between 1966 and 1969.

In the Hubei Provincial Museum, there is an interesting exhibit of lacquer-ware and musical instruments, including a display of bronze bells. Various examples of musical recordings are sold in local shops.

Xi'an: Xi'an once vied with Rome and later Constantinople for the title of greatest city in the world. Over a period of 2000 years, Xi'an has seen the rise and fall of numerous Chinese dynasties. Archaeological sites in and around the city serve as reminders that Xi'an stood at the very center of the Chinese world.

Human habitation in the Xi'an area dates back 6,000 years. Xi'an is located in one of the oldest settled regions of China, Shangxi Province. It was homeland to Qin, who ruled from their capital of Xianyang near modern-day Xi'an. He formed the first dynasty to rule over all of eastern China. The province remained the political heart of China until the 9th century. In those days, Xi'an was developed as one of the trade routes from eastern China to central Asia, noted at the famous Silk Road.

It is one of the few Chinese cities where old city walls are still visible. The walls reveal the chaotic history of the city as does the Bell Tower, a large building in the center of town that has an entrance through an underpass on the north side.

Xi'an is also home to the renowned 2000-year-old Army of Terracotta Warriors. In 1974, peasants digging a well uncovered what turned out to be one of the major archaeological finds of the 20th century. Every figure differs in facial features and expressions.

Xi'an has a large population of Muslim and its mosques are among the largest in China. The present buildings only date back to the middle of the 18th century, although the mosques might have been established several hundreds of years earlier.

In this area, much of the local food is of Islamic origin and include such dishes as fenerou, which is fried, chopped mutton with fine-ground wheat; heletiao, dark brown sorghum or buckwheat noodles; and fried pork or beef stuffed in pita bread, sometimes with green peppers and cumin.

One of the best places in China to pick up souvenirs such as name chops or chiming steel balls, Xi'an has Huajue Xiang, a narrow alley running beside the Great Mosque with many small souvenirs and antique shops. The City God's Temple, an old-style wooden structure that possibly dates back to the early Qing Period, is actually no longer a temple, but now houses a small market.