

CHINA (中国)



QUICK FACTS

Population: 1.35 billion

Area: Roughly the same size as the United States, about 3,750,000 square miles

Capital: Beijing (20.6 million)

Languages: Standard Chinese (official), various dialects such as Cantonese, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Zhuang, as well as several non-Chinese minority languages.

EDUCATION

The education system in China has experienced numerous reforms over the past three decades. China has a compulsory 8-grade education for ages 6-15. The literacy rate for 15 and over is 93.7%. Traditionally greater emphasis has been placed on rote-learning rather than inquiry-based or critical thinking. According to the World Bank, Chinese students outperform their American counterparts in math and science, but fall to the bottom when it comes to critical thinking and problem solving.

People wearing traditional Chinese ethnic attire



China traces its roots to the legendary Yellow Emperor, the first Chinese ruler. The founding of China began with the founding of the Qin dynasty, which unified most of the warring provinces and created the first Chinese state. The name China comes from the word Qin, which is pronounced "cheen". However, the ancient name for the country in Chinese is the Middle Kingdom "zhongguo." Known for its ancient history and culture, China is the most populous country on earth, with 1.35 billion people. The primary language is Mandarin, or "putonghua."

RELIGION

China is officially atheist, however there are two state sanctioned Christian denominations (one Catholic, one Protestant), as well as large numbers of Buddhists (especially in Tibet) and Muslims (mostly in the Northwest). Other religions include Taoism, and various folk religions. Rough estimates are Taoist— 30%, Buddhist— 11-18%, Christianity— 4-5%, and Islam— 2%. China was also governed in Imperial times by a Confucian system, a semi-secular philosophy based around order and harmony.

ETHNICITY

There are 56 recognized ethnic groups that within China. The largest of these is the Han, who compose about 92% of the population. Other large ethnicities include Zhuang, Hui, Manchu, Tibetan, Uyghur, Yi, and Miao. Han are the majority of the population within all but two provinces—Tibet and Xinjiang which have a majority Tibetan and Uyghur populations. Both are considered "autonomous regions" and have had a rocky relationship with the Chinese government regarding policies toward language, religion, and culture.

FAMILY, RELATIONSHIPS & CUSTOMS

Due to tradition as well as social and economic factors, Chinese youth tend to live with their parents through their education and frequently after marriage. Grandparents often play a significant role in the upbringing of grandchildren. "Thank you" and other polite words commonly used by Americans are reserved for more formal exchanges. Their omission by Chinese should not be perceived as impolite. Many gatherings center around food, and every Chinese holiday has a specific food that goes with it. Some major holidays include: Lunar New Year (Generally sometime between the end of January to the beginning of March), the Mid-Autumn Festival (sometime in September, the Dragonboat Festival, the Lantern Festival, and National Day (October 1st)



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CONTEMPORARY CHINA

China as it currently exists, began in 1949 following the Communist revolution and takeover. The previous government retreated to Taiwan, and the newly created People's Republic of China, under the leadership of Mao Zedong, began a dramatic restructuring of society. Initially, many of the reforms that were enacted benefitted ordinary Chinese, but later decisions resulted in dramatic societal upheaval and famine.

With the death of Mao in 1976, China embarked on a series of large scale reforms and changes which revitalized Chinese society. While under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, the economy saw tremendous growth. With these reforms came many societal issues. Those issues came to a head in 1989 with the Tiananmen Square protests, which called for democratic reforms and economic equality. The protests and were forcibly and violently put down by the government, In 1996, China took over control of Hong Kong in a peaceful transition. The territory had been governed by Great Britain for well over 100 years.

During the 2000s, China saw large scale growth and increase in its world influence. The 2008 Beijing Olympics marked a return to the world stage for China. As China ramped up its economic development to move into position as one of the world's largest economies large scale societal and environment problems have emerged, which have yet to be resolved. China's influence continues to increase, but the question of its future remains unsettled.



CHINESE IN THE USA

The first Chinese arrived in the United States in the mid-1800s, working in the California Gold Rush. However, most Chinese currently in the United States arrived following the restoration of US/Chinese relations in the 1970s. There are roughly three million people of Chinese descent in the US, located mainly on the West coast, and in the Northeast.



The flag of China was adopted in 1949 following the Communist Revolution and represents the Relationship between the Communist Party and the Chinese people



NAMES

First names, or given names, come second in China, after someone's family name. Generally, most Chinese people have three syllables in their name, one for their family name, and two in their given name. Traditionally, the first part of someone's name was determined by what generation they were part of, with siblings and cousins all sharing a name. However, in recent decades this has ceased being common and many now have only one syllable given names.

FAMOUS CHINESE

A few famous Chinese include: Yao Ming, Zhang Yimou, Jackie Chan, Bruce Lee, Jet Li, Zhang Ziyi, Hu Jintao, Mao Zedong.

CHINESE PHRASES

Hi	Nǐ Hǎo
Bye	Zàijiàn !
Good morning	Zǎoshàng Hǎo
Yes	Shì
No	Bù
Please/You're welcome ..	Qǐng Nǐ Búkèqǐ
Thank you	Xiè Xiè
How are you?	Nǐ Hǎo Ma?
I do not understand	Wǒ Tīng Bù Dǐng
Do you understand?	Nǐ Tīng De Dǐng Ma?
What is your name?	Nǐ Xìng Shénme...
My name is	Wǒ Xìng ...
Where are you from?	Nǐ Shì Cóng Nǎlǐ Lái De?

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