



Location of China in the world

Location

China lies in the eastern part of Asia on the western shore of the Pacific Ocean. The vast territory of China extends 5,500 kilometers from the centerline of the main navigation channel of the Heilong River north of the Mohe Town in Heilongjiang Province to the Zengmu Reef of the Nansha Islands in the South China Sea. From west to east, it measures about 5,200 kilometers, stretching from the Pamirs in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to the place where the main navigation channels of the Heilong and Wusuli rivers meet.

Climate

Because China is so vast, spanning nearly 50 degrees latitude, its climate varies. Most of China is in the temperate zone. Its southern part is in the tropical and subtropical zones, and its northern part is close to the frigid zone. Temperatures differ therefore rather strikingly across the country. The northern part of Heilongjiang Province has long winters but no summers; while the Hainan Island has long summers but no winters. The Huaihe River valley has distinctive seasonal changes but in the south of the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, it is spring all the year round. The northwest inland has hot summers and cold winters. The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in southwest China has a low temperature all the year round, being the frigid area in China; and some deserts are dry in the four seasons. China's variety of topography and climatic types has given birth to abundant scenic spots and places of cultural interest.



Ethnic groups of China

Land Area

China has a land area of about 9.6 million square kilometers, making up about one fourth of Asia, and one fifteenth of the total land area in the world. China is the third largest country in the world, only next to Russia and Canada.

Population

China is the most populous country in the world, and its population makes up about 21 percent of the world's total. The plains on the lower reaches of the Yangtze River and the Qiantang River, the Zhujiang River Delta, the Sichuan Basin and the Huanghuai Plain have the highest population density.

Ethnic Groups and Religions

China is a united multi-ethnic nation of 56 ethnic groups, such as the Han, Mongolian, Hui, Tibetan, Uygur, Miao, Yi, Zhuang, Bouyei, Korean, Manchu, Dong and Yao people. The majority of the population is the Han ethnic group (accounting for about 92 percent of the nation's total population). China's other 55 ethnic groups are customarily referred to as the ethnic minorities. No matter how big the population is, all ethnic groups enjoy equality in China.

China is a country with various religions. Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Christianity have all developed in China. The Chinese government adopts the policy that the Chinese people enjoy freedom of religious belief, and normal religious activities are under the protection of the Constitution and law.



The Great Wall

History

China, one of the world's most ancient civilizations, has a recorded history of over 5,000 years. The time-honored history has become China's profound cultural accumulations, and created China's splendid historical sites and remains.

In remote antiquity "Yuanmou Man" of approximately 1.7 million years ago, "Lantian Man" of 800,000 years ago, and "Peking Man" of 700,000 years ago lived on this magical land - China. At the ruins of "Yuanmou Man," "Lantian Man" and "Peking Man," tourists can feel the early civilization of the Chinese Stone Age.

After a long-lasting primitive society, China entered the slave society in the 21st century B.C. In 221 B.C., Emperor Qin Shihuang founded the Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.). This ushered China into feudalism under a succession of dynasties, such as the Han (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), Tang (618-907), Song (960-1279), Yuan (1271-1368), Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911). During this period China created the world-renowned civilizations of the slave and feudal societies, which are the pride of humankind. Even today when the modern civilization is fairly advanced, people cannot help gasping in admiration at the Chinese ancient technology, handicrafts and architectures, such as the high casting technology of bronze wares, incomparable pottery and porcelain wares, the majestic Great Wall, the solemn and splendid imperial gardens, and civilian residences in various styles.

On October 1, 1949 the People's Republic of China was founded. Since then China has started its brand-new course. Along with the passage of time, China has undertaken tremendous changes. In China the ancient and the modern are blended with each other perfectly, adding radiance and beauty to each other. Now China is spreading its unique charm day by day.

Capital

Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China, as well as the political, cultural, and international exchange center of the

country. Located in the north of the North China Plain, Beijing has a temperate semi-moist climate. Beijing boasts a long history. As early as 700,000 years ago, "Peking Man" lived in the Zhoukoudian area near Beijing. Beijing is one of the famous historical and cultural cities, and one of the ancient capitals in the world. In recent years, along with the rapid development of the economy and culture, Beijing has been marching toward the world, and has become a world-renowned modern metropolitan.

Official Language

Chinese is the most commonly-used language of China today, and one of the six working languages designated by the United Nations. Now the official language in China is Mandarin (putonghua in Chinese).

National Holidays and Festivals

National Holidays

- ★ New Year
January 1, one day off;
- ★ Spring Festival
The first day of the first lunar month, three days off;
- ★ Pure Brightness Festival
April 5, one day off;
- ★ International Labor Day
May 1, one day off;
- ★ Dragon Boat Festival
The 5th day of the 5th lunar month, one day off;
- ★ Mid-Autumn Festival
The 15th day of the 8th lunar month, one day off;
- ★ National Day
October 1, three days off.

National Festivals

- ★ Spring Festival
Each year, when winter is at its end and spring around the corner, people throughout China

enthusiastically celebrate the first traditional holiday of the year - the Spring Festival (lunar New Year).

- ★ Lantern Festival
The Lantern Festival falls on the 15th day of the first lunar month, the night of the first full moon after the Spring Festival. Traditionally, people eat sweet dumplings made of glutinous rice flour and appreciate lanterns during this festival.

- ★ Mid-Autumn Festival
The Mid-Autumn Festival falls on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month, which comes right in the middle of autumn, hence its name. In ancient times, people would offer elaborate cakes as sacrifices to the Moon Goddess on this day. After the ceremony, the family would enjoy sitting together to eat the pastries known as "moon cakes." The festival came to symbolize family reunion, as did the "moon cakes," and the custom has been passed down to today.

Regulations on Entry into and Exit from China

Visa

Foreigners wanting to travel in China can register at travel agencies in their own countries or in China to make arrangements for the trip. Travelers can also make arrangements on their own. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Control of the Entry and Exit of Aliens, foreign tourists should apply for entry visas at Chinese diplomatic representative agencies or consulates stationed in their own countries, or other Chinese organizations authorized by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs with this function. A tourist group consisting of five or more tourists may apply for the group tourist visa. The travel service that organizes the tourist group shall be responsible to apply for the group tourist visa.

Visiting different places in China requires different visas. Foreign travelers who want to travel in Tibet should apply for a confirmation for touring Tibet. From July 1, 2007, the Tourist Bureau of Tibet Autonomous Region closed its offices in hinterland. The confirmation for touring Tibet is issued by the Administration Office of the region's Tourist Bureau without any cost. The confirmation carries signs to prevent counterfeit and four characters meaning free for insurance. Foreigners wishing to visit Shenzhen, Zhuhai or Xiamen special economic zones may apply directly with visa authorities that are approved by Ministry of

Public Security for "tourist visas to the special economic zones." Foreigners who plan to stay in Hainan Province for less than 15 days for the purposes of business, tourism or visiting relatives can apply for entry visas in Haikou or Sanya.

In addition, foreigners whose government has signed a visa agreement with the Chinese government can simply follow that agreement (such as the visa exemption agreement for tourist groups of both countries). Foreign tourist groups from Hong Kong SAR shall be exempted from the visas if they stay in the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone for less than 72 hours. The residents of the Chinese nationality from Hong Kong and Macao can visit the Chinese mainland on the strength of the "Home Visit Permit for the Hong Kong and Macao Residents," and don't need to apply for visas. The Taiwan residents may apply for the "Permit for the Taiwan Residents to the Chinese mainland" at the port. Foreigners from Japan, Singapore and Brunei to China for the purposes of business, tourism, visiting relatives and friends, and transit for less than 15 days starting from the date of entry are exempted from visa.

The tourist groups and individuals from the countries or regions with diplomatic relations or official trades with China may still apply for the landing visas.

Customs

We would like to give a brief introduction to the relevant

regulations of the Chinese Customs as follows:

1. Customs Clearance

In accordance with the relevant laws and regulations, the luggage of inbound and outbound passengers must be under the supervision and control of customs. Passengers should make a factual declaration to customs on the actual contents of the luggage they are carrying into or out of the Chinese territory.

2. Restricted Inbound and Outbound Items

★ Gold, Silver and Articles Made of These Metals

Inbound passengers with gold, silver and articles made of these metals, each exceeding 50 g, should make declaration to the customs, and should carry them out of the Chinese territory. Gold, silver and their products (including inlaid ornaments, household utensils and other new handicrafts) bought by tourists at the designated shops in China with foreign currencies shall be released by the customs on the strength of the "special receipts" issued by the People's Bank of China.

★ Foreign Currencies

There is no limit to the amount of foreign currencies, travelers' checks and credit cards a visitor may bring in. The outbound passenger who carries US\$5,000 or less or an equivalent amount in other foreign currencies does not need the "foreign currency carriage permit" for leaving China. If the passenger who carries more than US\$5,000 and less than US\$10,000 or an equivalent amount in other foreign currencies he/she needs the "foreign currency carriage

permit" issued by the bank. Of he/she carries more than US\$10,000 or an equivalent amount in other foreign currencies needs the "foreign currency carriage permit" issued by the State Administration of Exchange Control for leaving China.

★ Renminbi

The limit of Renminbi for an inbound or outbound passenger is 20,000 yuan. An inbound or outbound passenger with more than 20,000 yuan shall not be allowed to enter or leave the Chinese territory.

★ Cultural Relics (including the works of died famous contemporary calligraphers and painters)

The inbound passenger with the cultural relics, which will be carried out of the Chinese territory again, should make declaration to the customs.

The cultural relics to be taken out of China must be appraised by China's cultural administrative departments. When taking out cultural relics, a passenger must declare them in detail to the customs. As for the cultural relics bought from the shops within the Chinese territory, the customs should check and clear them according to the appraisal mark stamped by China's cultural administrative departments and the invoices for the cultural relics that can be sold abroad. As for the cultural relics obtained through other channels within the Chinese territory, the customs shall check and clear them on the strength of the appraisal mark stamped by China's cultural administrative