

## Fact Sheet

# China



Welcome



### Where is China?

China is located in Eastern Asia, between North Korea and Vietnam. It has coastlines along the East China Sea, Korea Bay, the Yellow Sea and South China Sea.



### Time difference

South Africa is 6 hours behind China.



### Population

China is home to more than 1.35-billion people (2013), making it the most populous country in the world. In fact, it accounts for 20% of the world's population.

Over a quarter of China's population lives in its coastal provinces (Guangdong, Shandong, Zhejiang, Fujian, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Tianjin). Residents of Beijing have a higher disposable income than those in other parts of the country.



### Economy

China is the world's second-largest economy (after the US). Its industrial and construction sectors are the biggest contributors to its US\$9.4-trillion GDP.



### Language

Mandarin and Cantonese (you'll find greetings in these languages on the Overview page).



## Trade statistics on Chinese travellers in South Africa

Chinese travellers contributed R2.9-billion to the South African economy during 2003-2008. The average contribution by a business traveller was higher than by other visitors.

The most common reason for visits to South Africa by Chinese travellers has slowly changed – from leisure holidays in 2003, to business travel in 2008. Business travel is now the fastest-growing category.

The latest Euromonitor survey shows that some 70% of Chinese travellers rely on word of mouth from family and friends to get information on destinations.

A large percentage of the travel market in China also relies on travel agents, in a highly fragmented retail market. There are over 18 000 travel agents operating in the country.

Flights from China to South Africa are actually cheaper compared to flights to most of its competitor countries on a US\$/km basis.

South Africa's competitors in the Chinese market include the USA, Brazil and Australia. All three provide comparable 'beach' experiences.

The UK and Egypt also compete strongly with South Africa with their historical and cultural offerings.

In the 'nature/wildlife' experience market, South Africa faces strong competition from Kenya. Visiting natural attractions and watching wildlife are the most common activities of Chinese travellers in South Africa.

Businesses can capitalise on this by offering specials on safaris, a chance to explore off the beaten path, or the possibility of visiting surrounding countries.

The proportion of high-income earners (earning more than R20 000 per month), travelling from China to South Africa, increased from 30% in 2004 to 62% in 2008.

More than one in two Chinese holiday takers are between the ages of 15–34 years. Two in three are between the ages of 25 and 44.

Over two-thirds of Chinese travellers to South Africa are males.

Chinese holiday takers prefer to take short trips of three days or less.

The Western Cape and Gauteng see the majority of Chinese travellers – some 80% overall.



## How to make a Chinese person's day

Formal greeting: 'nǐn hǎo' (neen howw).

Often Chinese travellers love the best of both worlds. Show them local fine dining and places where they can enjoy some amazing seafood, but also provide them with authentic tastes of home at nearby Chinese restaurants.

Many Chinese visitors like to let their hair down at karaoke and casinos, so offer them a way to do this with no fuss around transport.

Usually Chinese travellers like to stay connected, so make sure they have Wi-Fi or close access to Internet cafés so they can send emails and photos back home.



## Chinese manners

### Restaurants

A good belch after a meal is considered complimentary to the chef.

It's considered important to be on time for a dinner date and to dress appropriately for the venue – to be poorly dressed is viewed as disrespectful to fellow diners.

Toothpicks are commonly used in China, so make sure that you supply your guests with toothpicks. In China, small towels are sometimes presented to guests at the end of a meal, so you might impress your Chinese guests if you bring some with the bill.

Many Chinese restaurants have a no-tipping policy, so this etiquette would have to be explained.

Don't dig through your food looking for tasty tidbits – this is considered extremely rude.

Chinese never finish all the food on their plate. Leaving a little behind shows the host that you were served enough food.

When eating a meal with chopsticks, never leave them standing upright in the bowl – this is done at funerals. Between bites, your chopsticks should be placed together right in front of you, parallel to the edge of the table.

### Professionalism

Always allow Chinese delegates to leave a meeting first.

Shake hands when you meet someone new. Hugging and kissing are not common practice.

If you present or receive a gift, always use both hands. If you are going to give your Chinese guests a parting gift (when they check in or out of your hotel, for example), it is also a good idea to wrap it beautifully. Avoid white in all aspects of present-giving; sometimes it is considered a colour of sorrow and poverty.

If you are lucky enough to have Chinese guests choose your establishment for a wedding, a golden congratulations card is a good idea – it means everlasting.

### Phone calls

Often it is not considered rude to interrupt a face-to-face conversation to take a phone call.

Many Chinese people are quite insistent about phone calls being answered, and will let a phone ring for a while before putting it down and then phoning again straight away.

It is not very common for Chinese people to use voicemail.