

Communications in China

Getting news

There are some local English language news media in China. CCTV 9 is an English channel available in most cities. China Daily is an English newspaper available in upscale hotels and supermarkets catering to foreigners throughout China. There are also a few English magazines such as China Today.

Hotels above mid-ranged or mid-ranged often have satellite TV in the room. Many hotels also sell newspapers from around the world and business-oriented publications like The Economist, albeit at very high prices. Some provide international newspapers free for reading in their coffee shops.

Mail

The Chinese Post Office is generally reliable and sometimes quick. There are a few things you need to adapt to:

Incoming mail will be both faster and more reliable if the address is in Chinese.

If not, the Post Office will translate the address into Chinese.



中国邮政

Fax

International fax services are available in most large hotels for about RMB 10 or more. Faxes within China can be made in the ubiquitous photocopy outlets that have the Chinese characters for fax written on the front door.

Cellphone

Cellular phones are very widespread and offer very good service. If you are staying more than a few weeks, it may be advisable to buy one. If you are travelling around, be sure to get a GSM phone and a SIM card so that your phone can work anywhere in China.

Some cards work only in one province. In general, most China Mobile SIM cards are capable of nationwide usage right off the bat. Be sure to ask the rules regarding travel with your phone.

Some services require you to activate the national roaming service (man you) before you can use it outside of the city or province. Be sure to turn off the service when you return to your home city as there is a daily surcharge for using it (this does not apply to SIMs that are already capable of roaming at purchase time).

Prepaid cell phone service is common although there are also monthly

plans. You can just go to a shop and purchase a charge card, which has a number and password that must be used to call the telephone company to recharge the money in your account.

You will be calling a computer and the default language is Chinese, which can be changed to English if you understand the Chinese. Even the English language options may be daunting, as there are several options.

China mainly uses the GSM standard, though there are some CDMA phones. For GSM, you need the GSM 900 and 1800 frequencies, just the same as most places except the Americas. If this is true then you can roam on a local China network but expect to pay US\$2-5/minute.

Since China uses R-UIM (SIM card equi

China Mobile cell phones will not normally make international calls. To get that service, you need to go to the local office of China Mobile and ask them to enable the "12593" international dialing service. You will have to prefix all your numbers with "12593" but calls to North America and other parts of Asia are only ¥0.4/minute (calls to Europe and Australia will be somewhat more expensive).

China Unicom allows international calls on all prepaid SIMs but the prefix is "17911" and their rates are significantly higher (about 8x more when calling the US; the difference is less when it is for Europe).

You can use prepaid cards for international calling with a cell phone, however, just dial the number on the card as with a regular landline phone. The charges will go to the prepaid calling card.

The Chinese GSM system uses 900 MHz and 1800 MHz, and most phones are sold with only those frequencies. Those phones will work in Europe, South East Asia, and Australia, but not in the US, Canada or South America (1900 or 850 MHz). Consider buying a "world phone" with more frequencies.

Electrical Fitting in China

If you are planning on using a foreign electrical device in China you may need a plug-in adaptor and a voltage converter.

Electrical current in China is 220V and 50Hz AC. To choose the proper voltage converter first check the labeling of your electrical device(s) to find out the voltage and wattage. You need a voltage converter that can handle a higher or equal wattage than that of the device that it is to be used with. You should also bring your surge protector in order to safeguard sensitive and expensive items such as laptops against power surges.

China has different shaped plug-in connections for power cords. There are two basic kinds, one is a three-headed flat and diagonally positioned connection and a two pin parallel connection. You can bring an adaptor set with you or buy one in an electronics store in China.

Source: <http://www.foreignercn.com/>