Your first hour, prepared.

China Arrival Ready

Three core guides, practical checklists and a one-page emergency reference. Keep this file on your phone, share it with your travel companions or print it before departure.

Content v2026.08.30 | Last fact check: 2026-08-26

This is a dated copy. Recheck time-sensitive requirements with official sources before travel. Source links need a connection; the guide itself does not.

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Essential service numbers

Police	Fire	Medical	Immigration service
110	119	120	12367

Independent travel information. Confirm time-sensitive requirements with official sources.

This public PDF contains no saved accommodation details, contacts or checklist answers from your browser.

China travel checklist for first-time visitors

Eight preparation checks for entry documents, payment, data, maps, your hotel, transport, optional rail and offline copies.

Last fact check: 2026-08-26

Before you fly

01 Check your entry plan

Resolve document questions before departure; this guide cannot decide whether you may enter China.

1. Open the NIA or government visitor site below and check your passport, purpose, route and travel dates against the relevant rules.
2. Ask your airline which documents it will check for your itinerary, including any connections. Keep your passport and any required entry documents within reach at check-in. Save your travel confirmations and the official requirements offline.
3. If a rule or exception is unclear, ask the relevant immigration authority or Chinese embassy/consulate before you fly.

Ready when: You have checked the official requirements for your own trip and can find the documents you plan to present.

If this does not work: Keep the entry question unresolved until the appropriate authority answers it; a checklist tick is not entry clearance.

Sources [1] [2] [9] [10] [11] | Last checked 2026-11-18

[ ] I checked entry requirements on an official site

Before you fly

02 Set up payment and a separate fallback

Account setup is preparation; a successful local purchase is the later payment test.

1. Choose one official payment app, such as Alipay or WeChat, and install it from your device's trusted app store.
2. Register using a number you can access while travelling, then follow the app's current card-linking and verification prompts.
3. Check the displayed fees and limits and how to reach your card issuer. Keep an eligible physical card and a modest RMB cash fallback separate from the phone.

Ready when: You can sign in, know whether card verification is complete, and have a separate fallback. Test a small intended purchase after arrival.

If this does not work: For rejected card linking, contact the app's support or the card issuer. Do not mark setup as a successful merchant payment.

Sources [3] [4] [12] | Last checked 2026-08-26

[ ] My payment setup and separate fallback are prepared

Before you fly

03 Prepare one data plan and its activation instructions

Check the exact phone and plan before relying on mobile data.

1. Ask your existing carrier or chosen provider whether the plan covers mainland China on your exact device and whether the phone must be unlocked.
2. Save the activation instructions, support contact, validity start rule and any roaming setting the provider requires. Keep activation codes private.
3. For an eSIM-compatible iPhone, use the Apple setup guide below with your provider's instructions. Check other phones with their manufacturer; do not assume all models behave alike.

Ready when: You know how and when to activate the plan and have a second way to get help if it cannot connect.

If this does not work: Keep the hotel address and first route available without data. Ask an airport information desk where official connectivity support is available.

Sources [7] | Last checked 2026-08-26

[ ] I have an offline route and connectivity plan

Before you fly

04 Test maps and translation without a connection

Prepare the exact destination, not just a list of installed apps.

1. Open your map app, search the accommodation's supplied Chinese address, and compare the result with the booking.
2. Save a screenshot of the destination, arrival terminal and planned transfer. Download the relevant map or language pack if your chosen app supports it.
3. Turn off Wi-Fi and mobile data briefly and reopen the saved material. Try displaying one useful translated phrase, then restore your connection.

Ready when: You can show the destination and a useful phrase without retrieving an email or loading a new page.

If this does not work: Keep a written or printed hotel name, Chinese address and phone number. Do not rely on an offline map feature you have not checked.

[ ] My saved map and translation fallback open offline

Before you fly

05 Save a hotel card you can show

Use the name, Chinese address and phone number supplied by your accommodation.

1. Ask the accommodation to confirm its Chinese name, full address and reachable phone number; compare them with your booking.
2. On the website, use Show my hotel card to enter the details locally, or save them as a screenshot or written note.
3. Reopen the saved card and check every line. Keep a copy outside this browser in case browser data is cleared.

Ready when: The correct address and phone number are readable without opening your email.

If this does not work: Ask the accommodation to confirm missing or conflicting details. Do not invent a Chinese address or choose a similar-looking branch.

[ ] My accommodation address is saved offline

Before you fly

06 Choose the airport-to-hotel route

Plan one route and one alternative, leaving room for terminal and service changes.

1. Check the airport or transport operator's official information for your arrival terminal, operating hours, pickup area and accepted payment.
2. For a taxi, note the official taxi rank; for a booked car, save its pickup instructions; for rail or bus, save the station or stop name and any transfer.
3. Save a screenshot or note with the destination, route and fallback. Ask the accommodation if you cannot identify the correct arrival point.

Ready when: You know where to go after arrivals, how you plan to pay and what to do if that service is unavailable.

If this does not work: Use an airport information desk to confirm the signed transport options before leaving the terminal.

Sources [4] | Last checked 2026-11-19

[ ] My first route and fallback are saved

If needed

07 Check your train booking, if needed

Skip this step if rail is not part of your trip.

1. Open the official 12306 English site below, or the service holding your booking, and check the account and passenger verification instructions.
2. If you already booked, compare passenger details, travel date, departure station and arrival station with your plan. Keep the confirmation and relevant support contact.
3. Use 12306's official help or the website's published rail guide for preparation questions; make any correction through the official service or your booking provider.

Ready when: Your rail plan is checked, or you have confirmed that no train preparation is needed.

If this does not work: Resolve verification or booking errors with the booking service before relying on a time-critical connection.

Sources [5] [6] | Last checked 2026-08-27

[ ] My train preparation is checked or not needed

Before you fly

08 Save and reopen the guide and Quick Card

Check the saved files now, while you still have a reliable connection.

1. From the website's download page, save the complete guide and the single-page Quick Card. Save your airline and accommodation confirmations separately.
2. Open the downloaded files from your device's files or downloads app with Wi-Fi and mobile data off, then restore the connection.
3. If you prefer the interactive website, use its optional browser-save control and wait for success. Keep the PDFs as a separate fallback and charge your phone.

Ready when: You have reopened the guide, Quick Card and confirmations without a connection.

If this does not work: Retry the download online, use another local file reader or print the Quick Card. An open browser tab alone is not a saved file.

[ ] My confirmations work offline

Arriving in China: From the Airport to Your Hotel

Follow the sequence at your own pace. Immigration, baggage and travel time vary; the first 30 minutes are a starting point, not a deadline.

Last fact check: 2026-08-26

After landing

01 Finish arrival formalities before the transfer

This is an order of tasks, not a promise that immigration, baggage and transfer take 30 minutes.

1. Follow the airport's immigration, baggage and customs signs and the officers' instructions for your arrival.
2. Keep your travel documents accessible and check the flight details on baggage displays. If a bag is missing, ask the airline's baggage desk before leaving that area.
3. Once in the public arrivals area, confirm your terminal and use the next steps to prepare the transfer.

Ready when: The arrival formalities are complete and you know which public arrivals area you are in.

If this does not work: Ask airport staff or the relevant officer when uncertain; do not leave a required process unfinished to follow this timeline.

Sources [1] [2] | Last checked 2026-11-19

[ ] I completed arrival formalities and checked my baggage

After landing

02 Connect and check that data actually works

Test a new page before assuming your data plan is active.

1. Follow the activation instructions saved before departure. Select the intended mobile data line and only enable roaming if your provider instructs you to.
2. Load a new page or send a message and check that it completes. Open the hotel card and saved transfer details.
3. If using airport Wi-Fi, confirm the network name and login instructions with signage or an information desk.

Ready when: A new page or message works, or your offline address and route are ready and you have asked staff for the next step.

If this does not work: Use the saved hotel card and route. Ask airport staff for official connectivity assistance instead of repeatedly changing unfamiliar settings.

Sources [7] | Last checked 2026-08-26

[ ] I confirmed my terminal and exit

After landing

03 Confirm how you will pay for the transfer

A linked card or a visible payment code does not prove the next payment will succeed.

1. At a staffed counter or an ordinary purchase you actually need, ask which of your prepared methods is accepted.
2. Check the amount and currency before confirming. Look for a successful payment result and the merchant's confirmation.
3. Keep the separate fallback accessible and ask about payment before taking the chosen transfer.

Ready when: A payment has succeeded, or the transfer provider has confirmed an available fallback you can use.

If this does not work: If a charge is pending or unclear, ask the merchant and check with the app or issuer before retrying, so you do not accidentally pay twice.

Sources [3] [4] | Last checked 2026-08-26

[ ] One payment method is ready

After landing

04 Open and match the hotel card

Check the destination before choosing a pickup point or boarding.

1. Open the hotel card you prepared on the website, or the screenshot or note saved before your trip.
2. Compare the hotel name and full address with the booking. Show the Chinese address to staff or the driver.
3. If a map pin points somewhere different, use the accommodation's phone number to confirm the correct branch and entrance.

Ready when: You and the person helping you are using the same confirmed destination.

If this does not work: Stay at a staffed location while you contact the accommodation; do not guess from a similar hotel name.

[ ] The destination matches my booking

After landing

05 Find the signed pickup point

Use the pickup instructions for your actual terminal and chosen service.

1. Taxi: follow the official Taxi signs and confirm the destination and payment at the rank or with the driver.
2. Booked car: compare the terminal, pickup zone and vehicle details with the booking before boarding.
3. Train or bus: confirm the destination, platform or stop and service status on official displays or with staff.

Ready when: Your pickup point, vehicle or platform matches the service you intended to use.

If this does not work: Return to the airport information desk if the pickup does not match, a service is closed or the payment method is unavailable.

Sources [4] | Last checked 2026-11-19

[ ] I verified the pickup or platform

After landing

06 Keep the ride details until you arrive

Retain enough information to check the journey or contact the provider.

1. Keep the booking, ticket or receipt and the accommodation address accessible.
2. Before setting off, confirm the destination once more. Share the journey details with a trusted contact if that is part of your plan.
3. If the destination or service differs from what you agreed, ask the driver or operator to clarify; use Emergency help for an immediate safety issue.

Ready when: You can identify the service and show the destination during the journey.

If this does not work: If the phone becomes unavailable, use the written address or ask staff to call the accommodation from a staffed location.

Sources [4] | Last checked 2026-11-19

[ ] I kept the ride or route details

After landing

07 Finish with a hotel check-in check

Your arrival plan ends when you have reached the correct accommodation and spoken to reception.

1. At reception, show your booking and keep your travel document ready for the staff's check-in instructions.
2. Confirm the booking dates and any payment request before paying. Ask the staff about any unresolved registration or document question.
3. Keep the hotel's contact details available for the rest of the trip.

Ready when: Reception has confirmed your booking and told you how to complete check-in.

If this does not work: If the booking or document details do not match, contact the accommodation or booking provider. For immigration questions, use the official 12367 service.

Sources [2] [4] | Last checked 2026-08-26

[ ] I reached the right hotel and checked in with reception

China Emergency Help: Numbers, Phrases and Fallbacks

Phone numbers, showable phrases and next contacts for immediate danger, lost documents or a phone and payment problem.

Last fact check: 2026-08-26

Essential service numbers

Police	Fire	Medical	Immigration service
110	119	120	12367

Show this to someone

I need help.
我需要帮助。

Please call an ambulance.
请帮我叫救护车。

This is my hotel address.
这是我的酒店地址。

I have lost my passport.
我的护照丢失了。

If needed

01 Get immediate help and give your location

Use the police, fire and medical numbers shown in this guide and on the Quick Card.

1. If you can do so safely, move away from the immediate danger and seek nearby staff or authorities.
2. Call the relevant emergency service listed in this guide. Start with where you are: airport, terminal, street, hotel or a visible landmark.
3. If speaking is difficult, show the matching Chinese help phrase and ask someone nearby to help make the call.

Ready when: The service or a person helping you knows where you are and what help you need.

If this does not work: If your phone or connection fails, ask nearby staff to call. Keep the printed Quick Card or written location available.

Sources [4] | Last checked 2026-08-26

If needed

02 If your phone or payment stops working

Use the offline address and a separate way to contact help.

1. At a staffed location, show your saved or written hotel address and ask for help contacting the accommodation.
2. For a missing bank card or a payment problem, contact the card issuer or the payment app through its official support channel.
3. If theft or an immediate safety issue is involved, use police help. Do not give verification codes or account passwords to someone offering an unsolicited fix.

Ready when: You have a safe contact or transfer plan and have reached the relevant provider about the affected account.

If this does not work: Ask reception or an airport information desk for help making the call. Use a separate payment method whose acceptance has been confirmed.

Sources [4] [3] | Last checked 2026-08-26

If needed

03 If your passport is missing, contact the right authorities

Use this as a contact sequence, not as permission to travel with a replacement document.

1. Report the loss to local police and ask how to reach the local public-security exit-entry office. Ask that office what loss-reporting steps apply to you.
2. Contact your country's embassy or consulate through its official website for replacement-document instructions.
3. Ask the local exit-entry office about your stay and onward-travel situation. Use 12367 for immigration-service information and discuss affected bookings with your airline or accommodation.

Ready when: The relevant authorities have given you instructions for your own documents and travel situation.

If this does not work: Ask your accommodation to help contact the offices. Do not assume a photograph, police report or replacement document alone is sufficient for onward travel.

Sources [2] [4] [8] | Last checked 2026-08-26

If needed

04 Use 12367 for immigration-service questions

Keep the question specific so you can find the right official service.

1. State the city you are in and the issue you need help with, such as where to ask about a missing passport or an entry document.
2. Write down the office or next contact you are given. Share identity details only with the appropriate authority through its official channel.

Ready when: You know the appropriate office or official next step for your question.

If this does not work: If the line is unavailable, use the NIA website or ask local staff to help you contact the appropriate office. Use emergency services for immediate danger.

Sources [2] [4] | Last checked 2026-08-26

Arrival Quick Card

Content v2026.08.30 | Last fact check: 2026-08-26

Essential service numbers

Police	Fire	Medical	Immigration service
110	119	120	12367

Show this to someone

I need help.
我需要帮助。

Please call an ambulance.
请帮我叫救护车。

This is my hotel address.
这是我的酒店地址。

I have lost my passport.
我的护照丢失了。

Before leaving the terminal

1. Confirm terminal and exit.
2. Open the saved Chinese address.
3. Check one payment method.
4. Use the planned route or official signage.

If the route breaks

1. Pause in a staffed public place.
2. Show the accommodation address.
3. Call the accommodation if needed.
4. Use the appropriate help number.

Show, do not retype

Keep your accommodation name, Chinese address and emergency contact in the private device card.

Do not put passport numbers or sensitive details into screenshots you may share.

Independent travel information. Confirm time-sensitive requirements with official sources.

Get the latest copy: https://travel.silkwander.com/arrival-ready/quick-card

National Immigration Administration of China: https://en.nia.gov.cn/

The State Council of the People's Republic of China: https://english.www.gov.cn/2025special/bizexpatsinchina2025

Check the original record.

Dates below belong to the existing fact and source records. Generating this PDF does not constitute a new fact check.

Entry eligibility and document requirements can change by nationality, route and date; confirm them on official immigration and government sites before departure. [1] [2]

Checked 2026-11-19 | Review due 2026-11-26

China's official payment guide lists bank cards, mobile payment, cash, bank accounts and e-CNY as basic payment methods. [3]

Checked 2026-08-26 | Review due 2026-11-26

Available transport and payment methods vary by city, operator and station; check on-site signage or the operator's official channel. [4]

Checked 2026-11-19 | Review due 2026-11-26

China Railway provides an official English-language 12306 passenger service website. [5] [6]

Checked 2026-08-27 | Review due 2027-02-27

Apple documents carrier activation, QR code, carrier link, carrier app and manual entry as possible eSIM activation methods on supported iPhones; provider support and device compatibility still need to be checked. [7]

Checked 2026-08-26 | Review due 2027-02-26

Call 110 for police help involving personal assault or property crime. [4]

Checked 2026-08-26 | Review due 2027-02-26

Call 119 for fire emergencies. [4]

Checked 2026-08-26 | Review due 2027-02-26

Call 120 for first aid or an ambulance. [4]

Checked 2026-08-26 | Review due 2027-02-26

Call 12367 for National Immigration Administration service information. [2] [4]

Checked 2026-08-26 | Review due 2027-02-26

The official mobile-payment guide describes app registration and card linking, refers linking failures to the payment provider or card issuer, and says supported cards, fees and limits depend on the payment product. Setup does not establish that an individual merchant payment will succeed. [4]

Checked 2026-10-29 | Review due 2026-11-28

Official references direct passport-loss enquiries to local police, public-security exit-entry offices and the traveller's embassy or consulate. This contact guidance does not establish replacement-document requirements or permission for onward travel. [8] [4]

Checked 2026-10-29 | Review due 2026-11-28

The official NIA online arrival card is free and available to fill in before travel. [9]

Checked 2026-11-18 | Review due 2026-11-25

If you can't fill it in online before your trip, scan the QR code at immigration, use an on-site device, or fill in a paper arrival card. [10]

Checked 2026-11-18 | Review due 2026-11-25

Check the NIA's current filling instructions to see whether you're exempt. The NIA lists 12367 as the immigration service hotline for consultation. [11] [10]

Checked 2026-11-18 | Review due 2026-11-25

Alipay and WeChat Pay support two ways to pay in person: you scan the merchant's code, or the cashier scans the payment code on your phone. [12]

Checked 2026-11-20 | Review due 2026-11-27

Small independent restaurants in Beijing are less likely than major commercial venues to accept physical cards. [12]

Checked 2026-11-20 | Review due 2026-11-27

A shop may have too little change for a large RMB note. [12]

Checked 2026-11-20 | Review due 2026-11-27

Sources you can revisit.

[1] Visit China

The State Council of the People's Republic of China | Accessed 2026-11-19

https://english.www.gov.cn/services/visitchina

Official service hub for visitors to China.

[2] National Immigration Administration

National Immigration Administration of China | Accessed 2026-11-19

https://en.nia.gov.cn/

Official immigration service site and 12367 service notices. The 2026-08-28 Shigatse border-area permit suspension was reviewed on 2026-08-30 and found not to change the site's linked general-entry or 12367 facts.

[3] Guide to Payment Services in China

The State Council of the People's Republic of China | Accessed 2026-08-26

https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202408/22/content_WS66c71b3ec6d0868f4e8ea2b1.html

Official overview of available payment methods for visitors.

[4] A Guide to Working and Living in China as Business Expatriates (2025 Edition)

The State Council of the People's Republic of China | Accessed 2026-11-19

https://english.www.gov.cn/2025special/bizexpatsinchina2025

Official English guide. Scoped 2026-08-27 checks covered train, emergency, mobile-payment and accommodation sections. Its historical visa-policy sections are not a current eligibility reference.

[5] 12306 China Railway

China State Railway Group Co., Ltd. | Accessed 2026-08-27

https://www.12306.cn/en/index.html

Official English-language China Railway passenger service entry point, refreshed for ticketing and passenger-service navigation.

[6] 12306 China Railway - Travel Guide and FAQ

China State Railway Group Co., Ltd. | Accessed 2026-10-25

https://www.12306.cn/en/faq.html

Official English guidance covering real-name ticketing, accepted passports, official sales channels, station preparation, boarding, endorsement and refund paths.

[7] Set up eSIM on iPhone

Apple | Accessed 2026-08-26

https://support.apple.com/en-us/118669

Official device guidance for eSIM activation methods. It does not compare China travel eSIM providers.

[8] Lost Passport - official contact guidance

National Immigration Administration of China | Accessed 2026-10-29

https://en.nia.gov.cn/n147428/n147498/n147780/n147970/c159250/content.html

Dated reference used only to identify contact offices. It is not current eligibility, document, deadline or onward-travel advice; confirm the procedure with the relevant authorities.

[9] NIA service notice on arrival card filling

National Immigration Administration of China | Accessed 2026-11-18

https://en.nia.gov.cn/n147418/n147463/c191530/content.html

Identifies the official online form and confirms that the online filling service is free.

[10] NIA arrival card announcement, section X

National Immigration Administration of China | Accessed 2026-11-18

https://en.nia.gov.cn/n147413/c187308/content.html

Covers filling in the card before arrival or at immigration, exemptions, and the 12367 hotline.

[11] NIA arrival card filling instructions (Chinese)

National Immigration Administration of China | Accessed 2026-11-18

https://s.nia.gov.cn/zwfwpt/foreignBus/arrival-card/apply

The current online form instructions list exemptions and cover transit passengers who need to leave the port.

[12] Payment Services in Beijing

Beijing Municipal Government | Accessed 2026-11-20

https://english.beijing.gov.cn/latest/specials/essentialtipsfornewarrivals/paymentservices/202408/t20240830_3785647.html

In-person QR payment, physical card acceptance at smaller venues, and change for large RMB notes. No individual decline or store acceptance was tested.