

First Trip to China Checklist

A printable, shareable pre-trip checklist for first-time visitors - covering documents, payments, mobile data, hotels, arrival, food, and emergency basics.

How to use this PDF

Use this before departure, then keep a copy on your phone for arrival day. Scan for the online checklist and detailed guides.

[OPEN THE ONLINE CHECKLIST](#)



Documents and bookings

- ☐ Confirm passport validity and current entry or visa requirements for your nationality.
- ☐ Save digital and offline copies of passport, visa/entry documents, flights, hotel bookings, and insurance.
- ☐ Prepare your first hotel name, phone number, and address in Chinese.
- ☐ Check whether your airline or arrival process asks you to complete any forms before landing.

Phone, apps, and internet

- ☐ Decide how you will connect: eSIM, roaming, local SIM, or airport Wi-Fi as a fallback.
- ☐ Install translation, maps, payment, ride-hailing, and itinerary apps before departure.
- ☐ Download or screenshot hotel address, airport route, passport details, and key bookings.

Money and daily travel backup

- ☐ Set up Alipay or WeChat Pay and link an international card before you travel.
- ☐ Bring a backup bank card and a small amount of RMB cash for edge cases.
- ☐ Check your bank app, SMS, 3D Secure, and roaming access so card verification can work abroad.
- ☐ Pack important medicine in carry-on luggage and keep prescriptions or doctor notes for essential medication.

2. China Arrival Checklist

Goal: leave the airport calmly, reach your hotel, and make sure the essentials work before you start sightseeing.

At the airport

- ☐ Keep passport, boarding pass, arrival documents, and first hotel details ready.
- ☐ Connect to mobile data or airport Wi-Fi before leaving the arrivals area.
- ☐ Take a screenshot of your hotel address in Chinese and your route from the airport.
- ☐ Use airport rail, metro, official taxi queue, or ride-hailing; avoid unofficial drivers approaching you inside the airport.

Getting to your hotel

- ☐ Confirm the destination before entering a taxi or ride-hailing car.
- ☐ Keep the hotel phone number available in case the driver needs to call.
- ☐ Do not schedule a complicated transfer or major attraction immediately after landing.
- ☐ Keep passport and booking confirmation accessible for hotel check-in.

First 24 hours after check-in

- ☐ Test mobile payment with a small purchase if possible.
- ☐ Test maps, translation, ride-hailing, and route planning from your hotel.
- ☐ Save your hotel as a favorite location in your map or notes app.
- ☐ Plan tomorrow's first route and a simple way to return to your hotel.
- ☐ Keep the first day easy: food, rest, a short walk, and essential setup first.

First-day rule: solve network, payment, hotel address, and return route before ambitious sightseeing.

Arrival guide



3. Payment Setup Checklist

Goal: avoid being stuck when cards are not accepted or when QR payment is expected.

Set up before departure

- ☐ Choose your primary mobile payment app: Alipay, WeChat Pay, or both.
- ☐ Create an account and complete any identity or card verification requested by the app.
- ☐ Link an international card and confirm your bank allows overseas and in-app payments.
- ☐ Make sure you can receive SMS or app verification messages while traveling.
- ☐ Update your phone OS and payment apps before departure to avoid login issues abroad.

Know the QR payment flow

- ☐ Merchant scans you: open the payment code in the app and let the cashier scan it.
- ☐ You scan merchant: scan the merchant QR code, enter amount if needed, and confirm payment.
- ☐ For restaurants, some QR menus ask you to pay inside the menu; others ask you to pay at the cashier.
- ☐ Keep receipts or screenshots for deposits, hotel payments, and ticket purchases.

Backup plan

- ☐ Carry a small amount of RMB cash for rare cases, deposits, or technical problems.
- ☐ Bring at least one physical card as backup, but do not assume every place accepts Visa or Mastercard.
- ☐ Save your bank's international support contact and know how to unlock a blocked card.
- ☐ If payment fails, try another card, another app, or ask staff if cash is accepted.

Related guides: [Payments in China](#) - [Alipay](#) - [WeChat Pay](#) - [Useful Apps](#)

Payment guide



4. On-the-Ground Quick Reference

Use these quick prompts when you need help with transport, payment, food, or medical situations.

Situation	Show this in Chinese	Meaning
Taxi / ride	请带我去这个地址。	Please take me to this address.
Payment	可以用支付宝或微信支付吗？	Can I pay with Alipay or WeChat Pay?
Food	不要辣，谢谢。	No spicy, please.
Allergy	我对____过敏。	I am allergic to ____.
Emergency	请帮我拨打120。	Please help me call 120.

Final pre-sightseeing check

- ☐ I can access mobile data or Wi-Fi away from the hotel.
- ☐ I can pay with at least one method and have a backup.
- ☐ I have my hotel address saved in Chinese.
- ☐ I know how to get back to the hotel today.
- ☐ I have passport photos or document copies saved securely.
- ☐ I have checked dietary, medical, or accessibility needs before booking activities.

For deeper step-by-step guides

Payments, internet, arrival, hotels, food, healthcare, transport, and city planning guides for first-time visitors.

[BROWSE ALL GUIDES](#)



Practical travel guidance only. Entry, airline, customs, payment, and app requirements can change; verify current rules with official sources and providers.