



Travel Tips for ICC 2026

Here are some helpful insights into your China adventure during ICC2026. This information and associated travel suggestions should help you feel more comfortable in the diverse experiences that await you.

As a country, China can be quite the paradox. In some regions, you'll find beautiful landscapes and mountain ranges while in some cities, you are among rich culture and history in the most densely populated cities in the world.

After closing their borders to tourists from nearly 50 years, China has embraced tourism; it is now one of the top 5 visited countries in the world. Meanwhile, a vast majority of Chinese shops don't accept foreign currency and it may be difficult to find someone who speaks a language other than Chinese.

China is one of leading tech innovators in the world, but at the same time, many familiar websites and platforms are blocked (Google, Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, BBC, and more).

So, what does all this mean for you?

When you get to China it is a bit of a balancing act, embracing the ancient traditions while enjoying the modern amenities. Study up on the culture you are about to encounter and prepare to be flexible. At the same time, there are tools you can bring to make your trip a success.

Things To Do Before Your Flight

- **Do you need a visa? Start early.**

If you require a visa, **China requires you apply in advance**. There are **many different types of visa options**, depending on the reason for your trip and how long you are staying. Citizens from some countries may be able to use short stay visa-free policies.

Your passport should be valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure date from China. Keep it with you at all times. It may be needed to travel, check-in or in other situations.

- **Get a SIM Card or eSIM**

Your phone will be a valuable item throughout for your visit. With the right preparation, it can be used for communication (locally and internationally), route-finding, congress programming, day-to-day cash payments, and more.

Physical SIM cards are available in China, but a China-specific eSIM is simple and convenient, activating upon entry and ready to use.

- **VPN**

Operating your phone with a strong VPN (Virtual Private Network) should give you access to your favourite regular websites. This should include posting pictures to Instagram, updating Facebook, or tweeting while in China. You may not be able to download the VPN after you arrive, so make a decision beforehand.

- **Learn a little Chinese**

Making an effort to learn key phrases will go a long way in China. You may not become fluent in Mandarin, but being able to ask simple questions or extend greetings is both courteous. Start the list with "Hello", "Thank You". Keep the sentence together and list the quotes afterwards

"Where is the bathroom",

"How do I get to...?",

"Hello", "Thank you",

"Can you take our picture?",

"How much does this cost?"

"Do you speak English (or Russian or Spanish)?"

Your Phone Apps

Now that you have a SIM/eSIM and VPN on your phone, here are a few more apps that will help.

- **WeChat**



At its simplest, WeChat is a communication tool like SMS or WhatsApp. It will allow you to communicate across China and across the world. Your Chinese friends can share contacts with a quick QR scan. In reality, WeChat can be used for much more than simple communication. It is a preferred payment method. You can connect your bank card and make easy payments for everything from a major souvenir to roadside ice cream.

- **Alipay**



This app is another country-wide method to make payments. It is easy to use and provides clear reporting on payments made. Like WeChat Pay, Alipay can be linked to one or more bank payment cards. Through the app, you can arrange for car rides, train trips, flights, hotels as well as pay for that roadside ice cream.

- **Translation App**



Even if you have mastered some key phrases before coming, there may still be a communication barrier as you meet locals in China. People in China are often willing to assist but they are also quite familiar with translation apps. You will deepen your connection with others (from China and from other countries at the Congress). Options include Waygo, Pleco, Yandex...

- **Map Apps**



In China, you may need to forgo using Google Maps but apps like Baidu or CityMaps2Go are good substitutes. Like other map apps, you can find restaurants and services as well as arrange for offline use, if necessary.

- **Ride App**



Didi Chuxing provides a variety of user-friendly options akin to Uber. When using Didi Chuxing, you have the opportunity to participate in ride-sharing, book vehicles designed for individuals with disabilities, and even arrange for a designated driver.

- **App Up Before You Go**

It's also a good idea to **have all of your other travel apps setup and ready to go**, so you won't have to deal with the slow download speeds you may face once inside the country.

Money



The Dollar, Euro, and Pound may be accepted in most of the world, but in China you'll need to convert your money to the Yuan (RMB). You can travel a long way with a working phone tied to your bank card. Most places are happy to work in electronic payment.



Power Plugs

China uses 220V voltage, with Type A, C, and I sockets (two flat pins or two round pins in a V-shape). Some electrical appliances from Europe or America may require a plug adapter.

Some additional tiny tips:

- **Consider taking the train** – they travel at high speed; they take you to the centre of the city.
- **Avoid drinking tap water directly** – boil your water or choose bottled.
- **Carry some toilet tissue with you** – some facilities may not supply it.
- **Prepare for various types of toilets** – some are sit-type and some (rural) are squat-type.
- **Pack for diverse weather conditions** - layers help, good walking shoes, hat, etc.
- **Tipping is not common in China** – not refused but not expected.
- **Some power banks cannot fly** - It must be below 100 Wh and bear a visible CCC label (China Compulsory Certification).
- **Be Adventurous to Chinese Cuisine** - cuisine is rich and varied; try local specialties.